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Soldier, You're IT!

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Soldier, You're IT!

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75

PETERSON

6-21-45

To
PFC. "SONNY BOY"
United States Armored Infantry
Who "picked up" a Purple Heart
And the Silver Star
Before the Siegfried Line
But whose
Name and Service Unit
Are Here Omitted
Because he Would Wish it so

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I

CONFUSION

SOLDIER, Sailor, Marine, Airman—you're IT, every one of you. We have called you to do a terrible job. The Nation called you—Nations, I should say, United Nations. But by her prayers the Church has participated in this call. She has prayed that you might have God's help in your appalling work. Would God please aid you to do it quickly, and protect you meanwhile. Would he enable you to accomplish your deadly purpose with a minimum of suffering and danger to yourself and a maximum of destruction to your foes. Would he assure the triumph of justice, that his will might be done.

The implicit assumption that your side was just, and that you were God's accredited messengers, was not stressed; but it was by no means absent.

Thus the Church prayed widely and fervently on D-day. Do my words misstate the burden of her prayers—in other than brevity?

What has the Church done to prepare you for this work of unimaginable carnage? Has she showed you how to maintain the integrity of your own personality as you fight and kill? And how has she prepared you to interpret her own role of asking God to support you in it? I recall her chagrin at the end of World War I, when she found that her representatives in the various warring nations had been praying against one another. Every national group of Christians had blasphemously sought to talk God into being its special ally.

Is the Church doing much better today?

World affairs have not been her affair. Standards of living among Chinese, Malays, or Hottentots were subjects for econo-

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mists to theorize about. Political and economic boundaries were left to nations and their leaders. State and Church must be kept separate. Hence the Church was powerless to check the drift toward World War II.

Now that you are bearing the most cruel burden of this war, the Church again prays that you may win. Her prayers for victory are perhaps better camouflaged with broad phrases than twenty-five years ago, but does camouflage change the stubborn character of facts?

And where does this leave you? What are you to think of the Church and her message, when, beneath all her pious phrases, she simply follows the leadership of State or Nation? She has persistently taught you that war is hellish, that killing of human beings is utterly evil. But when killing becomes a world-wide, major industry, commanded by the State, she implicitly blesses it with her prayers.

Can you, as you return eventually—some of you—to rebuild your lives in your several communities—can you reach any other conclusion than one that sets the Church definitely below the State in all the larger relations of justice and fair-dealing of men with other men?

This is not to eliminate the Church. She would remain a convenient beautifier of your marriage, and you could side-step some responsibilities toward your children by sending them to her schools, schools that meet one hour per week (perhaps oftener), but whose efficiency in child-training is far below that of state schools, even as it is less efficient than your own influence as a parent. And the Church could still serve you in matters of consolation. She could wipe away your tears when death tore a loved one from you, and she could speak words of comfort and hope when it came your turn to die.

In short, you will come home to *live* by and for the State. You will *die* by and with the Church.

II

BABEL

SOLDIER, what does an utter babble of tongues mean to you? Your own officers sometimes confuse you. They are human. They give an order and then countermand it. Many of their orders appear meaningless. Often this is because they cannot tell you the reasons for the order. Hence arises your stock expression: "This is the army!"

But frequently staff headquarters will be found working at cross-purposes to higher authority. Army, Navy, Air Force, co-operate so loosely that men die, and defeats break the strongest hearts. Only after many blunders does a nation like our own knit its defense into an effective, working unity. Reasons for this blundering disunity are deeply rooted in history. Some of them, like our separate departments of war and navy, with no cabinet post for air, are relics of a day when war was simpler. Some of them arise from the pull of the future: demands of a juster state of society than we have yet achieved.

Count up, however, the contrary voices that speak in politics and statecraft, in any branch of military science or peaceful jurisprudence, and the Church can match the battling and babbling shibboleths of any and all comers. Her multiplied creeds are competing pillars in a new tower of Babel. You wonder why this tower has not fallen on the heads of Christians long ago? Actually, it has fallen. They are simply too bewildered to know it.

Just here I must slip you a key to the plot. Twist it around in your hands a bit, till we shall be ready to use it. Familiarity makes keys more usable, whether they be keys that render land mines harmless or keys that resolve the confusion produced by babbling tongues.

The core of all confusion lies in our efforts to distinguish truth

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from that which is untrue. Maybe the untrue judgment appears most likely. Perhaps it is accepted as true by the most respectable people, those who bear every mark of wisdom. Often it is eloquently and persuasively championed by men who "know that they know"!

How do you or I know what is true?

This is the key that you need to get hold of: this *how* of knowing. When you know any truth, however simple or complicated, you always make use of some *way* of knowing.

Commonly we pay so little attention to what we *know about* *WAYS of knowing*, that we assume that there is only one way. We just know, and that is all there is to it.

So, Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Flyer, if you are going to clear any of the confusion that the babbling voices of a confused Church—and a civilization still seeking the way into a new era—have bequeathed to you and the world, you will need to distinguish two *ways* of distinguishing truth from error.

The first and oldest of these ways is that of your own childhood and your everyday thinking. Let's call it *Common Sense*. It is older than you are because men have been thinking this way as long as they have been men. We know this by the fact that they met their difficulties and dangers, and solved them sufficiently to survive and serve as our ancestors.

The other way of knowing is much newer. It is so modern we haven't worn the brilliant paint off it yet. It was successfully planted in our civilization by Socrates and Plato twenty-four centuries ago. In other civilizations, such as those of China or India, it may be older yet. That is unimportant. What counts is the fact that this second way of knowing is an awkward and overconfident stripling compared with its ancient rival of (suppose we guess) 5,000 centuries. For lack of a better name, maybe we can call it the *Wise Man's Way*.

Now let's put these two ways of knowing in parallel columns, that we may compare their detailed steps. I suggest that you read both steps numbered "1," then both numbered "2," and so on:

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*Common Sense Way*¹

1. All men have difficulties that they may just feel at first.

2. These felt difficulties naturally prompt men to think. Men apply their native intelligence in trying to get at this difficulty or that by discovering what it is, identifying it as precisely as possible.

3. This discovery or defining of any difficulty is purposive. It is *in order that* the difficulty may be cleared away or solved. To free himself of hardship, inconvenience, or pain, man's thinking finally hits on a *means* of solving or overcoming the particular occasion of distress. (One man rarely, or never, tackles problems wholesale, or tries to solve several at once.)

In the language of science, it is here that we formulate our best *hypothesis* aimed at achieving the desired solution. This hypothesis simply states what we think is true, true enough to get us past the rough spot now blocking our way.

4. Then, because we are men rather than horses or chimpanzees, we get busy really think-

Wise Man's Way

1. Men of greater native capacities are on a precise par with the rest of us here. They, too, have toothache and tuberculosis. Earthquakes and avalanches crush their frail bodies as they do ours.

2. Thus also with wise men. Doubtless they are keener discoverers, and lead their fellows in identifying and defining the exact nature, and perhaps causes, of the difficulties.

3. The wise man duplicates the procedure of ordinary people on this matter of suggesting hypothetic solutions, but, as we might expect, he proceeds more confidently, and often with better prospects of success.

4. At this stage the wise man shines in all his glory. Here he demonstrates his wisdom so

¹Here I am indebted to Professor Dewey's book, *How We Think*, Chapter VI in the 1910 edition, Chapter VII in the 1933 revision. Both editions are published by D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, who have given their permission for this reference.

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ing about this best idea we could hit on to free ourselves of our trouble. We now *reason* more specifically than we did in step two. We go into a huddle with ourselves, and maybe with our companions also, and we consider: *if* this solving proposal is a good one, *then* we should expect such and such specific results when we try it.

We like to relax physically for this reasoning part of our problem-solving, and make it an armchair procedure. But we don't have to sit down to reason things out. Much of our best thinking is done on our feet—or on our bellies, if we're establishing a beachhead and the difficulty we're working on is a torrent of shrapnel.

And be sure that the thinking goes on a hundred times faster than I can trace its steps. In a really hot spot you might go through all of the first four of these steps many times in one second. The fifth step might take a half-second or ten centuries.

Sometimes we act impulsively or thoughtlessly. Maybe the pressure is so great that we don't have time to think. It is possible for men to make monkeys of themselves in animal-like behavior. But the point is this: normally we use our heads.

Even when the danger baffles us completely, or when we fail to overcome it and get killed, our buddies who live to

competently that we tend to accept solutions on his say-so. He gets the job done with such apparent finality that we are prone to assume that it is really done. His *theory* is so convincing that we take it as fact.

Of course, we are more apt to rely on the wise man for solutions like devising a world court or settling questions of theology, than we are in getting a platoon of infantry around behind a row of hidden machine guns. It is on matters that we call abstract, broad questions of right and wrong, or issues where theory looms large and discussion arises in the forums of public opinion, that the wise man renders his best service. Assuredly we reap rich harvest from wise men who speak much and *do* little, who teach and challenge others to do, rather than concentrating on the doing themselves. Glance down the honored list: Socrates, Plato, Thomas of Aquino, Kant, Adam Smith, Emerson—and Wendell Willkie as he served so promisingly since 1940.

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fight another day rethink our situation and go on with the task. Rethink Tarawa and you achieve Anzio. Rehearse Anzio and you take Normandy—and Berlin.

5. Finally, we “try it out on the dog.” We use something (or somebody) as a guinea pig, in order to test our hypothetic, best judgment as to how to solve our difficulty. We resort to experiment. We rig up a proving ground of some sort, doing our best to make it *fit* the situation implied and specified by our difficulty. We do not test social theories mechanically, or vice versa. Only quite indirectly do we mend romantic griefs by donning a tailored suit.

The nub of the matter is that here our questions get answered with practical conclusiveness. Maybe the answer is: “Fine, you did the trick.” Possibly the consequences of our trial say to us: “You’re getting warm,” or “Not quite.” Frequently our best efforts fail completely. The results are wholly negative. Even this is an answer, often the wisest we ever get. It is Nature saying “No”—one of the two clear words in her vocabulary. (The other is “Yes.”) This “No” sets us back on our heels and starts us thinking again. Maybe it kills us—and bequeaths that problem to our children.

Here, at last, we know truth—as much truth as beings with our limitations ever know at

Note. Only in this fifth phase of our knowing procedure do we come to the striking difference between these two ways of knowing. Up to this point the two have run largely parallel, with the advantages perhaps inclined toward the way of the wise man. But this is no grief for the ordinary fellow who has only common sense as his guide, for, living next door to a wise man or reading his books, he may borrow ideas or judgments without restriction.

Indeed the large and helpful co-operation between the two ways of knowing is high-lighted by the fact that, on simpler, more specific questions, like those of the physical sciences or everyday matters that he calls factual, the wise man turns gladly to the experimental tests of common sense. His beefsteak is acceptable when it is tender to his teeth, no less than with us common folks.

On questions that are bigger than matters of fact, however, our wise man shines as a “light that never was on sea or land.” In studying and settling these most vital and tragic of all questions (our failure here is what landed you in your foxhole), the wise man simply does not

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any given time. Perhaps it is only the truth that we were more foolish or more evil than we had supposed.

Here men have found, and are yet discovering through recurring challenges, the truth that democracy is a better way of human living together than any of its rivals—in spite of all the trouble we have making it work, keeping it growing sufficiently for its domestic tasks, and extending it to world proportions.

These five steps comprise the way of knowing that the Apostle Paul deemed the wisdom of God, although it was “unto the Greeks foolishness.”

They are the method of our most highly developed sciences, with their patient research and their final resort to the laboratory.

have any fifth step of experimentation. He doesn't need it—or so he assumes. His wisdom enables him to know final truth simply by pure reasoning. A professor, before whom I once sat as a student, put it this way: “If the facts ever disagree with truth, it is just too bad for the facts.”

What did he mean? Well, he was testifying to his own adoption of the wise man's way of knowing in preference to the common sense way. He was assuming that wise men can know truth by some procedure that is superior to the laborious checking of facts. This higher procedure is usually a long and devoted work of research (our first three steps) and reasoning (fourth step).

Or, the superior wisdom may be held to come by divine revelation. There are wise men who honestly believe that wisdom comes to them directly from God. They deem themselves so essential to the working of his Church (as the wise man's way of knowing conceives the Church) that they claim God has made them his special and authoritative Vice-gods on earth.

But whatever may be the source of this supposed higher certainty, it has no need of any (fifth step) check with facts. Truth, so conceived, claims to need no experimental test in any scientific laboratory. It

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needs no trial on either dogs or men, simply because the wise man already knows it independently of anything that facts could tell him.

His role in life, then, is to *tell* his fellow men, to dish out ready-made truth to them.

Just a couple of remarks, now, concerning both ways of knowing. Perhaps you noticed the omission of the number "5" when you came to that point in the wise man's column. This is because, let me repeat for emphasis, on broader matters that are characteristically his domain, the wise man thinks he needs no fifth step of experimentation. His way is four-step thinking. The way of common sense has five steps. This final step, which the one way of knowing adds and emphasizes, while the other omits it entirely, is the distinguishing mark that you will learn to look for as you determine which way of thinking any speaker or writer is using.

One thing that will help you discern this mark is the different use of *words* made by the champions of each way of knowing. Both camps use words. Language is an indispensable tool for either thinking or living, no matter which may be our way of thinking. But for the way of common sense, words are only *means* to ends in active conduct. Common sense has its verbal specifications as to how its hypotheses may be experimentally tested in physical or biological laboratory, or in the laboratory of human living together in the same world. Each laboratory and each experimental technique must be adapted to the specific question at issue. But the way of common sense does not have written creeds. It reveres no dogmas. Its world of possible truth is wide open.

For the user of the wise man's way of knowing, words are more important. Lacking final resort to any experimentation in real life, the wise man must needs stop with words. They tend to become *ends* for him. Historic creeds, whether religious, po-

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litical, or economic, are his specialty. Dogmas are his meat and drink. His is a closed world. Its unanswered questions are apt to seem unimportant to him, not worth answering.

So by their fruits in *doing*, on beyond what each of them says, you will distinguish these two kinds of thinkers and knowers.

The common sense knower observes, thinks, and talks, and then thinks again, in order that he and his fellows may *do*. Only then, when the experience of doing crowns the experience of thinking and mutual converse, does he claim to know.

The wise man observes and thinks and talks, and then makes a high specialty of profound rethinking, and the best possible formulation in language, of the wisest conclusions his reasoning has achieved. Then he proclaims these words as *truth*, such absolutely true truth that the facts of life cannot hope to refute it. We common folks can receive truth only as it falls from the wise man's lips, and as it is recorded by his pen.

The common sense way knows in terms of *deeds*. The wise man's way knows by means of *words*.

Do you see any signs, in the new, free world you are fighting to achieve, that the man who is so wise that he cannot co-operate with his fellows in great, fifth-step, experimental verifications of even our wisest, most universal human conclusions—any signs of this wise man being recognized finally as just a "wise guy," one who could not resist the temptation to egotism that his own philosophy led him into?

And which way of knowing do you think Hitler uses? Let us remember that Hitler is perhaps mainly a front for the German General Staff. How is the German Superman supposed to do his determining of truth? Well, the answer is longer than I can set down here in detail. It is clearly traceable, however, through the writings of German philosophers and their popular spokesmen, such as Bernhardt prior to World War I and Hitler in his *Mein Kampf*. We find the names, Spengler, Nietzsche, Fichte, Hegel. They emphatically announce in every chapter their use of the wise man's way of knowing. They are the boys who worked out its latest, technical development.

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Again and again they express their scorn for British and American empiricism, or experience-centered philosophy, as crude trial and error, and exult in their own surer way. They know simply by reasoning, a far quicker, more rational way. Theirs, they insist, is the really human way of knowing. Trial and error is the way of lower animals.

If we are tempted to laugh off such lusty claims, we are stopped in our tracks by the impressive array of our own thinkers, from Emerson to Josiah Royce, who have adopted, and ably defend, German idealism and its rational way of knowing. They, too, deem resort to fifth-step experimentation as unworthy and brutish.

Are they right? Is all of our experimental trying-things-out mere fumbling like that of a rat in a maze or a monkey in a puzzle box? Assuredly not. What lower animals do, when they find themselves in difficulties, is immediately to begin doing something. They act without thinking. Their thinking is direct association of thing with thing. They associate one concrete situation with another, immediately; and they remember in these concrete associations. They do not use *ideas* either as bridges or as separating fences between things or situations. They jump directly from step one to step five, omitting the three intervening steps of *identifying* the difficulty, *suggesting* a solution for it, and then *reasoning out* how this suggestion should be tested by experimental application to the difficulty.

The animal uses *two-step* thinking. The wise man requires four steps. We ordinary fellows, along with the most competent research men in our best developed sciences, have to make use of all five steps in the common sense way of knowing. Jesus and the prophets likewise commend this practical way of distinguishing truth from error, as we shall note more fully in subsequent chapters.

Simply because of his omission of the fifth step of experimentation, the wise man tends to become a dictator. Perhaps you or I would find the temptation irresistible if we had both his philosophy and his opportunity. The reasoning, with which he completes his identification of truth, is necessarily private. It

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goes on only in his head, and he must then tell the rest of us what it is and how we should act with reference to it. Experimentation, however, at least on all the larger issues of life, is necessarily a matter of co-operation. In such working together to learn truth, we come to know one another better.

Which way of knowing would you deem the more democratic? Which do you suppose is more likely to serve the extension of democracy to the whole world? Which promises to be the heart of that philosophy of life that is required to organize mankind in a new world order, and save your sons and daughters from World War III?

III

BIBLE

SOLDIER, you're IT! You are a man. That means you are morally responsible for your own thinking and conduct. Our fellows take us this way, whether we like it or not. Our whole structure of law and courts, and all our branches of government, are ways by which our fellow men hold us responsible, even as we hold each of them responsible, too.

And believe it or not, there is Jesus! There he is as a Standard of righteousness and truth and freedom that towers above all our laws and all our governments. There he stands, the most remarkable Figure in all history. Yet he is there for us only because something most significant and real about him has been preserved in the Bible.

It is well to recall a fact that biblical scholars have emphasized, the fact that these records have come down to our time in decidedly hit-and-miss fashion. This is a big story and an important one. But it is still true that we have all that we have about the character and teaching of Jesus because we read it in the ancient writings which we have translated and put together into the New Testament that your chaplain has for you. And we find the background and basis of this teaching in the still older books of the Old Testament, in Moses and the prophets. The Bible as a whole gives us Jesus. There he is!

Trained students of the Bible have warned us against reading it uncritically. They are wholly right about this. We should read it, and read with our own eyes and minds, as faithfully as we can. If your "looney" reads an order carelessly he may land you in a volcano of cross-fire that relieves you of all postwar problems. Perhaps the order was mutilated by shrapnel splinters and

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both heading and signature were illegible when it reached him. That's the way it is with all the books of the Bible, you know. We don't have original titles or signatures to any of them. Just as your commander then uses all that he knows about the personalities of his superiors who might have written the order, and what he remembers of their differing tricks or habits in the use of language, when he tries to figure out its meaning, so should you and I read the records of Jesus.

We sometimes have trouble understanding books written long ago and narrating events so far removed from our experiences. We then ask experts, specialists in biblical scholarship, to read with us and help us interpret. This may aid us materially, but in one way it increases our difficulties. We then have to interpret what the scholars say and write. And, like other human beings, scholars are sometimes overconfident. Actually they are wiser than the mill-run of the rest of us; and this naturally leads them to adopt the wise man's way of knowing instead of the way of common sense. In fact, they have inherited this four-step way more directly than you and I. Their university life brought it straight to them, while the environment of farm or factory left us relatively free. Usually, too, as specialists in Bible study, they are not specially trained in logic, and are therefore not likely to be able consciously to choose one logical method of knowing in preference to another. And once they fall under the spell of four-step thinking, they are grievously tempted to overconfidence by the mere fact that this method does not require them to submit their judgments to a fifth step of overt consequences in our common walks of life.

Note how this works out. The scholars read the Bible so critically, and make such a technical and specialized profession of their reading, that the rest of us are likely to get discouraged and simply accept their interpretative judgments *uncritically*. Professionalized scholarship thus tends to defeat the broader goals biblical scholars are seeking. Overcritical reading by a few results in uncritical reading by everybody else. We of the great majority are, in our turn, tempted simply to let the scholars do

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both our reading and our moral thinking for us. We lose, by such surrender of personal initiative, all the benefits of firsthand reading. We lose its rich adventure. We forfeit the glory of treading new paths with our own feet.

If, however, we decline to surrender our personal rights in such fashion, we will have to do a bit of common sense thinking for ourselves. This means that the Bible records as they stand, even as we have them in our various translations, will be the basic facts, or initial scientific data, in terms of which we shall define our problems and reason our solutions through to final test in life. We can scarcely participate in the scholar's attempt to dig back of these records to sources where he thinks our Bible writers got their literary materials. The fact that none of these source manuscripts now exists—that not even a fragment of any one of them has ever been discovered—simply vetoes them for the thinking of common fellows like you and me. Whatever these sources may be to the scholars, to us, and for any firsthand uses we may try to make of them, they are simply myths. In the day of wider and deeper democracy toward which mankind is now headed, we can not use any procedure that conceives the careers of some men, no matter how wise they may be, as officials in a great field day of telling the rest of us what's what.

Now I must lay a finger on an important "brass tack." If you are going to read the Bible for yourself, you will have to avoid a logical error that some scholars in our day are peculiarly prone to commit. They tend to read the Bible with presuppositions in mind, concerning God and his relation to the world, that are contrary to the presuppositions of the Bible writers. It is fashionable in our day to shy away from miracles. Both scholars and their intellectual kinfolk are doubly cautious about thinking of God as related to nature in any way that could make reasonable his doing anything in it comparable to your digging of foxholes and felling trees. But the men who wrote our Bible were neither shy nor embarrassed with the notion that God had created the whole world of nature and that he was therefore capable of showing his control over it by deeds naturally visible to men.

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This is not the place for me to attempt any detailed handling of the problem of miracles. It is a real problem, even though we may discover one of these days that its darkest corners have been largely created for us by our inherited way of thinking. I might as well admit that I cannot see any role for miracles save as simple teaching devices¹ to help early learners of God grasp the fact that he is greater than all of nature, and that men may therefore rely on him for security when nature does her last and worst to them. They thus learn to think of him as a real, cosmic Ground of all their highest values: an Ideal great enough to unify the varied and conflicting details of their lives and to harmonize the discords in their society.

It is under the supposition that God is thus greater than nature, that Bible writers set down their stories that the centuries have preserved for us. I am saying only that if we want to understand their reports of their own great adventures in learning of God and perceiving his meaning for their nation and their everyday lives, we will have to read in the full light of their own basic assumptions rather than assumptions of our own that may be contrary to theirs. Should we inject foreign assumptions into our reading, we might miss the meanings these writers have put into the books of the Bible just as your "looey" would confuse his reading of the mutilated order if he thought it was a scrap from some GI Joe's letter to his girl.

One more big point on your procedure or method of Bible reading. If you can shake your mind loose from the prevailing thought habits of our whole Western civilization, you won't have to pussyfoot on the beliefs you get from the Bible. If you can discard our habitual wise man's way of thinking about such big subjects as life and death and their deeper meanings, and do your reading under the guidance of the same common sense procedure you make use of in reading a newspaper or a bulletin

¹If you should wish to read my fuller treatment of this question, you will find it in Chapter X, "The Laboratory of the Kindergarten," in *The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, Revell, New York, 1936. Also, if you are in a library, you might ask for *Christendom*, Summer 1939 issue, and turn to my article, "The Supernatural Is Natural."

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posted by your battalion commander, you would simply put the ideas you got from your reading *to work* in your thinking and your active life. You would be too busy to become seriously bowed down with doubt and hesitation concerning their deeper implications that overreach the heads of all men.

Our inherited way of reading the Bible comes near to distorting our personalities in spite of ourselves. It leads us to assume that we must get final truth merely from our reading of words supposed to have been written by wise men. Actually you and I have more sense than to feel so sure as this about our capacity to grasp words and remember them. So we do one or the other of two things. We either pass the buck to church officials and scholars and lean on what we think is their certainty; or we get discouraged in trying to achieve certainty with our own puny heads, and we then become limping, stumbling interrogation points instead of strong men.

If you do your reading, however, under the way of common sense, you won't be burdened with the notion that you have to get final truth from mere reading. Your failure to achieve absolute certainty by simply reading or even memorizing the words of the Bible will not, therefore, send you to your chaplain a cringing bundle of doubts and fears. You will be immune to such afflictions of soul simply because you will be expecting Bible pages to tell you only what you might *do* and *be* on that one day. You will perceive deep wisdom in Jesus' advice: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." You will find Jesus and the prophets telling you that you may expect to learn truth—that is, acquire a practical and usable grasp of it—only when you have lived out in deeds of overt action the faith your reading may arouse in you.

That's just how crucially important to your personal life this choice of common sense thinking is for you. If you cannot choose it, if the habits of mind in which our whole culture is rooted are too strong for you to shake off, then you will remain a weakling in your own soul, drawing strength only from wise men who happen to have some sort of moral or social authority over you.

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This leaves you a wise man's puppet, hopping about when your superiors pull strings.

But if you can come to the Bible as a truly common sense reader, you will refuse to be a puppet. Neither will you suffer from sickening impulses to doubt and hesitate. Not expecting final truth from mere reading of any words, however sacred, but only principles of life that you yourself must work into a plan of action, you will be content to let knowledge and truth come to you in terms of fruits and consequences that flow from sound action. The fact that this will involve a new and less absolute definition of both knowledge and truth than our wise men have used will trouble you not at all. You will be seeking only that sort of *humanly* knowable truth that will enable you to live a life that is both useful and free.

So the Bible, thus read by you, will arouse gameness in you rather than hesitation. Reading it as you read your *Stars and Stripes*, you will be challenged, by your simplest interpretation of just what it says to you, to take all reasonable and necessary risks of faith in Jesus' way of life. Doubting, flinching twists of soul, that our inherited way of knowing inflicts on you by its conception of certainty that is wholly beyond you, even as it is beyond the wise men themselves, will worry you no more. In their place will come the confidence that makes men strong. You will find that you can be gloriously certain, in the practical sense of certainty that common sense thinking implies and seeks, without descending to the intellectual slavery of dogmatism. You will be certain that you want to live the free and righteous life you find outlined in the principles of Jesus. In your eagerness to live this life, you will be glad to let certainty grow with the experiences of living. Your continued harvest of the fruits of such living will actually provide you with far greater certainty—greater in the sense of being more usable by you—than the wise man's way of knowing could ever give you in advance of fifth-step experience.

Thus our two ways of knowing really give us two different *kinds* of certainty, not differing degrees of the same certainty.

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The certainty provided by the one rests on a wholly different basis from that offered by the other. The basis of certainty for the wise man's way is the inner reasoning procedure of the wise man. He can convey this certainty to you only by telling you about it. If you get it at all, you get it on his say-so.

Certainty for the common sense way of knowing, however, rests on a basis of shared experience. All the reasoning that our wisest men can do contributes valuable preparation for it, but this preparation is mere planting and watering. The harvest of certainty comes only with observed consequences in experience, which all men may share. This kind of certainty is therefore inherently yours. It is no hand-me-down from somebody else. Certainty concerning the Christian life comes to you directly and naturally through your own experience of reading the records of Jesus' life and teaching, and then living by the principles you find there just the very best you can.

I said a moment ago that this way of knowing would save you from the intellectual slavery of dogmatism. That's right. I mean it. The dogmatist is a slave-driver and the one who accepts his dogmas is a slave. You cannot afford to be either.

There is a popular sense in which dogmatism means any and all sorts of confident certainty. If a man has real convictions, regardless of his grounds for them, and if he ever reports them to his fellows, people call him a dogmatist. Now if this is all that dogmatism means, then it is obvious that the only way to avoid it is to be uncertain, or at least to hide your best certainty under a bushel. To protect yourself against the accusation of dogmatism you would have to assume the role of a weak-kneed, personified question mark.

Actually, however, in the sense that is deepest grounded in the history of human thought, this Greek-rooted word "dogmatism" does not mean this at all. It refers not to all sorts of certainty, but only to those peculiarly private judgments of wise reasoners that are handed out ready-made to you and me. This basic meaning readily acquires—at least it has done so through centuries of history—the supplementary sense of such reasoned

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judgments *officially sanctioned* and proclaimed by some *established authority*. Dogmas become, then, the pronouncements of wise men officially sealed and decreed by authorities enthroned in Church or State. A man is dogmatic when he champions such decrees. He is a happy victim or willing slave of dogmatism when he points to them as the ground of his certainty.

This bit of discrimination concerning the meaning of a word is essential to you and me because it shows us that to avoid being either the dispensers or recipients of slavish dogmatism, all that we have to do is to free ourselves from enslavement to an ancient way of knowing. We do not have to inoculate our personalities with degenerating doubts and fears.

If and when we really take our common sense way of knowing, and actually rely on it in our study of the Bible and in our efforts to learn from the character and teaching of Jesus how to become Christians and how to build his principles of life into our society, we will discover that we need not be either pussy-footers or dogmatists. As we read the prophets and Jesus, we shall not be seeking final truth in their words. Rather shall we be looking for information and suggestions that we can use in more correctly defining our problems and learning how to put our best suggested solutions to helpful and significant tests in life.

In these preparatory and tentative steps of our study, we can be as confident as the facts and evidences we have acquired may challenge us to be. We can be as confident as the depth of our loyalties and our conception of the importance of our purposes in life may happen to make us. Glorious confidence in our aims and clear-eyed vision as to their long-run significance would not make dogmatists of us, provided we stick to our common sense thinking.

Under this mode of thinking and knowing, in our study of the Bible, we would be formulating great programs of Christian life and specific ways of building the kingdom of God on earth. We would not be prejudging either the truth of these programs or the correctness of our interpretations. These conclusions we would expect to read only in consequences, which we might look

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for to some real, though limited, extent in our lifetime, but which we would leave mainly to our children many generations hence. Building a Christian world for our children, we would find ourselves sublimely confident, but in no sense blindly cocksure. We would gladly utilize the teaching of the apostle that "the righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17.)

Now in succeeding chapters of this book, I am going to be reading the Bible and talking about what I think certain of its teachings may mean to you and me for the solution of problems we now face in World War II and anticipate in the postwar world. You wouldn't think much of me, would you, if I suggested one mode of reading to you, and reserved another for myself?

Well, I'm no wise man. I have never had any luck trying to know with the theoretical certainty that this classic way of knowing claims. Most of the basic principles of all the logic and philosophy that I know, I learned on a Kansas farm. Hence I have no choice but to read the Bible exactly as I am urging you to read it. I take its words just as nearly at their face value as I know how to do, after making allowance for all relevant differences between my own time and the conditions that surrounded each biblical writer and the peoples whom he apparently anticipated as readers of his words.

One point I try especially to heed. I let each writer tell his story to my mind on the foundation of his own presuppositions concerning the nature of God and God's relation to the world. Of course he may be wrong in his assumptions concerning these basic matters, even as you and I can make mistakes on such big questions. But if he should be in error, I cannot hope to correct him by injecting some assumption of my own into the place of his. The only way I can hope fairly to reconstruct his foundations, if they should be erroneous, is first to discover what his teachings mean and can do toward reconstructing our present disrupted world—when they are interpreted against the background that he gave them.

Some of my colleagues in university circles today throw fits

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about this straight-from-the-page way of reading. They have a big word for it. To them it is "obscurantism" to read the Bible in the same firsthand way we read a newspaper. They deem it darkly out of date—that's a rough definition of their word—to read the Bible assuming that, when a prophet says he is reporting what God told him to say to the people, he means just that.

I don't pretend to have any offhand knowledge of how much this prophet knows. I merely know enough about logic to know that if we assume that the prophet is mistaken in the face-meaning of such words as these, we are denying the God he is trying to tell us about. At least, we are refusing to let him tell us what he thinks God is to him.

Now in my refusal to make use of the wise man's way of knowing, maybe I'm just plain dumb. But at least I'm free. I tell you I'd rather be the most obscure obscurantist that ever broke out of the woods than to call in the wise brothers to do my reading and thinking for me. And neither am I willing to admire wise men from afar and shiver under the draft of my own doubts and fears because I can't honestly claim to match their dogmatic brand of confident cocksureness.

So here comes some rather rugged (and old-fashioned, if you please) reading of the Bible. Some scholars will call it a strange mixture of obscurantism and liberalism. It isn't that at all. It's a rather daring synthesis of ancient and modern values: the sort of synthesis a man can make when he masters the logic of common sense well enough to prevent his evidences, in steps two and four, from predetermining his conclusions in step five. I am convinced that our present situation demands daring thought as well as brave fighting. In an honest attempt to make my thinking something more than daring, however, I have supplemented the philosophy of my father's Kansas farm with more than eight years of graduate study and research in the Universities of Kansas, Princeton (Theological Seminary), Yale, and Chicago. I have let them hand me the highest degrees they offer. What I think of the hood and sleeve stripes they used in my final

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decoration is contained in an article I published in the May, 1933, issue of the *Journal of Higher Education*. I tell you there's something radically wrong with the Universities and their highest scholarship when the civilization that they lead wallows in the gore of two world wars in a quarter of a century.

But my Bible reading isn't dogmatism because I'm not putting it over on you. I'm telling you in advance, that under my deliberately chosen scientific philosophy and logic, my best reading enables me only to lay before you a precisely formulated *faith*. Indeed, precise formulation is more than this little book claims to achieve. It's only the goal I'm aiming toward. Because I do not *know* how much truth there may be in my best understanding of the prophets and Jesus, unless and until you join me in a world-wide trial of it in a valiant attempt to build the kingdom of God on earth, you not only *can*, but you *have to*, take it or leave it on your own responsibility, not mine. You're IT on the receiving end, if you consent to read these pages. I'm IT only as concerns my responsibility to read the Bible under my practical way of thinking and knowing, and do my best to show you how you, too, can maintain your own personal independence by using that same method in your reading of both the Bible and these lame lines of mine. Indeed, I cannot help but leave the receiving or rejecting of anything I say about the Bible wholly to you, simply because you are free. Here's hoping that you will be cocky enough in your freedom to stand off against me and do your own thinking and judging, however sound my judgments may ring in your ears.

I ask you fairly to consider my own thoughtful judgment that I'm no dogmatist, no matter how confident I sound. Why am I not? Simply because I'm using an *undogmatic logic*. A way of knowing that tells you from the word go that the responsibility of determining truth is yours, when you see how its best suggestions work out, simply has no way of closing the questions it expressly leaves to you. Maybe you will discover, in the course of familiarizing yourself with this practical way of knowing, that

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dogmatism, in its basic meaning that I just indicated, is actually a disease of mind that is characteristic of our inherited classic way of knowing.

May I repeat, then, that in my Bible reading in succeeding chapters, I am suggesting only that here are some great meanings I find in Jesus and the prophets: meanings from them for my fellow men and me today that can have only the tentative standing of unverified hypotheses, however wise we may be, until we all co-operatively determine their truth or falsity by the consequences they produce in the laboratory of twentieth century living.

IV

FOXHOLE

SOLDIER, you don't have to read the Bible. You can pass it up if you want to. But if you have any need that learning about Jesus could fill, then it is to the Bible you will go for information concerning him. That is, if you want it firsthand. And you will take this information straight. You won't high-handedly twist it off its own foundation.

By taking the Bible straight, I don't mean that you have to be gullible, or an openmouthed sucker, swallowing everything blindly. If you use your head, hitching it into a team with your heart, you won't read with blind faith.

Let me try to put this strongly enough to get my point across. *You don't have to believe in God.* You can be an "incorrigible atheist," as one of my very best friends honestly calls himself, if that is your wish. But if you want to know anything about the greatest and wisest and best Figure in all the history of men, you will go to the Bible and read the story of his life and teaching, *consciously recognizing and remembering as you read the fact that the men who wrote that story believed in the reality and personality of God.*

Be sure that you have a perfect right to disagree with them, even on this basic point. You can choose the atheist's *faith* that the physical and moral universe has somehow existed from all eternity, and hence never had to be created. If you so choose, you will be *living by faith* just the same as if you believe in God. The atheist doesn't *know* that the natural universe is eternal any more than you and I *know* that God is eternal. He merely chooses one faith rather than another. That, too, is your privilege. You may take your choice among many faiths. Here's hoping,

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for the sake of the intellectual integrity of the atheist, that he has rationally supportable evidences to back up his faith, even as you must have such evidences to support any faith you adopt. Otherwise the faith would be blind or purely emotional, and to hold a faith in that way is ultimately disintegrating to any personality.

So now and again, as often as you wish, you can back away from the Bible and compare the faith of the men who wrote it with the faith of the atheist. You can lay the faith of Jesus in the reality of the Father, from whom he claimed to come, alongside that of any unbeliever. But if you would do this comparing fairly, you will *back away* from the Bible to do it. You will not muddle your own thinking or violate your own personality, and warp Bible meanings, by dragging into your reading any assumptions contrary to those of the men who wrote it. I mean by this to suggest to you how crucially important it is that you should read with an unprejudiced mind. If you can ignore the prejudices both of popular superstition and of our many historic creeds, you will read the Bible more "critically" than most preachers read it.

The odds are that this is the way you will read the Bible in your foxhole or on your hospital cot. The greatness of your need there—the immediacy of the issue of life or death—will tend to brush from your mind the cobwebs of all prejudgments as to what you *should find* in the Bible, and leave you open-minded enough to find what *is there* for you. In danger and pain, receiving the kingdom of God "as a little child," you may enter into that kingdom so fully and vitally as to bring its way of life back to the old home town with you.

Perhaps I can best make clear the sort of contribution you and your buddies may make to the great forward steps I hope to see Christianity achieve in the postwar world, by borrowing a point from our friends, the sociologists. Professors Reinhardt and Davies published a book in 1932 in which they insisted that habits of mind, such as either of the ways of knowing that I outlined in Chapter II, are so securely seated in the inner citadel

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of our several personalities that it is actually next to impossible for any of us to change them, once the habit gets established in our early youth. They point out that when we seek to change any overt habit, like operating a machine, handling a physical object or tool, or speaking a new language, we can take command of our eyes, hands, or tongue and persist in making them do our will until the new habit is formed, however difficult or long the task. Even so, we all know how hard it is to change simple, bodily habits where only muscles and nerves are involved. How many men have you known who quit smoking and stayed quit? Did you ever try to learn touch typewriting after using the hunt-and-punch system? Can you make French words sound like they do on a Parisian's lips? In all these overt habits Reinhardt and Davies say the mind functions as a "superior directing force to bring about the change" in the workings of our nerves and muscles, parts of our organisms that are distinctly subordinate to it.

How, then, are we ever to change habits of mind? How can we swing from one habit to another in the inner working of this superior directing force itself? How can we swear off from wise man's thinking and break ourselves in as common sense knowers, when ways of thinking and knowing are habitual workings of our central nervous systems, and we have no capacities higher than these to take command of this peculiarly inner process of change?

My authors decline to say that it is wholly impossible. But they insist, on the basis of their study of the exceedingly rare cases where men have acquired new mental habits, that the task is so difficult that no man accomplishes it until "extreme pressure is brought to bear upon [his] central nervous system through actual and continued physical discomfort."¹

I don't pretend to know the degree of correctness their judgment carries. Probably, I venture to suggest, they have our limitations sized up more accurately than most of us like to admit.

¹*Principles and Methods of Sociology*, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1932. All references are to the complete paragraph on page 117.

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Psychologists in general agree that only the strongest of motives can change our mental habits. To the extent that this is true, however, there is a ray of hope for mankind in your sufferings in foxhole or ambulance plane, sufferings so lamely described by the phrase, "actual and continued physical discomfort." It may be true that we on the home front cannot free ourselves from thralldom to an inherited way of thinking about all our larger questions of life, such as the questions dealt with in our Bible; but it is possible that new habits like those outlined under the way of common sense may be born in you, fathered by your sufferings and mothered by your determination to save your children from a repetition of your agony.

If this should happen, then you may come home, not to teach us hopeless adults who have not endured enough to jar our superior directing mental processes out of their accustomed ruts, but you may bear your message of a new era for mankind and the world to your little ones and ours. Their minds, if the children are not over seven or possibly ten, may be yet unspoiled with fixed and fortified habits hell-bent toward destroying civilization through the endless repetition of ancient follies.

By no means am I suggesting the idea that your sufferings are sure to work this regeneration in your habits of thinking and knowing. Nothing happens automatically or mechanically in our human life or world, independently of our co-operation. I know that sufferings in which we can see no meaning, and beyond which our hopes cannot reach, tend more to brutalize than to teach us. I am saying only that if you can remain captain of your soul and keep busy at the high task of thinking and loving, even as you suffer, then there is hope for you—and for us through you.

Soon you will come to a chapter on "Love," in which I try to tell you all that I know, at present, about what is involved in your need to keep your head and heart even as you kill and bleed.

V

JOSHUA

JESUS didn't spring his teaching on the world out of thin air. He built on the foundation of the law and the prophets. He recognized the history of Israel as a stream of human experience into which God had entered as a Teacher of his chosen people. God chose Israel not because he was a respecter of persons, but because he had to begin his teaching of all men with somebody, somewhere; and evidently Israel qualified as this initial body of students because of Abraham's ability to hear and willingness to heed. As we do in our teachers' colleges to-day, God had to teach teachers, in order that they might teach others.

And Jesus accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as a credible and authentic record of God's relations with Israel. He appears to accept its authenticity in a sense that involves some conception of its writing having been guided in a really significant way by God himself. Jesus does not give us any details as to *how* he holds this. Therefore we should take his attitude toward the dependable character of the Old Testament in a decidedly practical sense. Here for us to read are the very writings that he read. What meanings he got from them are there for us, if we can grasp them. Hence the Old Testament should provide most significant scientific data as to the background of Jesus, crucially important to us in our efforts to understand him.

From Jesus' omission of all details as to how he justifies his confidence in the Hebrew Scriptures, we can be sure of a significant negative judgment. We know that Jesus did not hold these Scriptures infallible or absolute. Had he held any such view as this, he would have had to teach it fully and explicitly,

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for such absolutist thinking is found among the Hebrews only in the priests, scribes, and Pharisees, whom Jesus condemned with unqualified severity. In short, the very ideas of infallibility and absoluteness (the notion that human beings could be super-human) were adopted by Christian theologians after they had become "wise" by accepting Greek philosophy in place of the philosophy of Jesus and the prophets—after they had substituted the wisdom of Plato for the "wisdom of God," as the apostle Paul calls it. From the third century to the Reformation, absolutist theology led Christians to hold the Church infallible, and the same basic logic prompted Protestants to claim infallibility for the Bible. The whole notion is seen to be foreign to Jesus and the prophets the moment we shake our minds loose from traditional habits—if we can do it at all—sufficiently to utilize Jesus' method of knowing by final appeal to fruits or consequences. Certainly neither of the words "absolute" or "infallible," which Greek-inspired philosophers have coined to name these inventions of their own type of certainty, a certainty held to be superior to the continuing flow of experience, appears even once in the Bible.

Now look at the writings that Jesus held to be the authentic and dependable record of God's dealings with Israel. Here, whether we like it or not, is a *God of battles*. We find a conquest of Canaan directed by God, a conquest whose ruthlessness might well serve as a model for Hitler. We find Samuel, God's judge and prophet, "[hewing] Agag in pieces before Jehovah," as he announces God's rejection of Saul "from being king." We see Elijah as God's executioner of 450 prophets of Baal. Among the Israelites no prisons were needed, for under the Mosaic law there was only one penalty for major crime, death by stoning at the hands of all the people—mob rule in process of evolving into something higher.

Is this the same God whom Jesus called Father? It is—if we dare to read our Bible without reconstructing it to suit our fancy. What, then?

The answer is simple enough. God takes men as they are,

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with all their faults and limitations, and tries to teach them—even such sorry specimens as you and I.

Thus he worked with Israel. When Abraham heard God's call and gave God the chance he had waited for, for no telling how many centuries, human culture was at a stage that we may say was forty centuries closer to ancient barbarism than the civilization we boast today. Although the anthropologists tell us that, as early primitives, men probably lived peacefully with one another, this was not true of them in the time of Abraham. Near-barbarians (if it is fair to call them such), like the tribes that descended from him, habitually fought rival tribes. Therefore, God did not *cause* blood to flow when he took charge of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. Neither did he make that conquest any more ruthless than it would have been without him. But by directing it, he gained opportunity to guide its outcome in a direction whose meaning lies yet beyond our twentieth century culture.

By directing Joshua's conquest, God curbed Israel's lust for taking captives to make slaves and harlots of them. He also reduced to a minimum the influences toward lapse into idolatry. Indeed, the subsequent and recurring outbreaks of polytheism in Israel were at least partially traceable to the people's failure to heed Joshua's command that they "utterly destroy," rather than enslave, the inhabitants of enemy tribes.

Generations later it was not merely the continuance of inter-tribal warfare, but the fact that the Canaanitish tribes were an abiding temptation toward lapses into paganism, that prompted Samuel's severity with Saul and Agag. His spirit is not vengeance or hatred, however, but zeal that Israel might be truly loyal to God, when he pronounces sentence: "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (I Samuel 15:22.)

With Elijah it is the same story. Baal-worship has captured the throne of Israel, in the kingdom now divided, and is threatening to engulf Judah. Apparently only the severest measures can save the loyalty of "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which

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have not bowed unto Baal." Elijah's procedure is an overt and visible demonstration of God's superiority to Baal. It met the common sense specification that Moses had pronounced several centuries earlier. Moses had taught Israel to identify the presumptuous prophet, who might give the people a "word which Jehovah [had] not spoken" by noting the fact that "the thing follow[ed] not, nor [came] to pass." (Deuteronomy 18:20-22.) Elijah's challenge was simply: "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." (I Kings 18:24.)

Evidently Elijah's execution of the prophets of Baal, following his victory over them at Carmel, was none too severe. At any rate, it did not permanently check idolatry in the northern kingdom nor enable the seven thousand faithful to do more than flee (perhaps) to Judah or Benjamin. The ten northern tribes ultimately fell before Assyria and became lost to history.

Judah survived only after capture by Nebuchadnezzar and seventy years of Babylonian captivity, being released when Cyrus of Persia overcame Babylon. It was at this time that God's prophets succeeded, finally, in turning the attention of the sons of Abraham forward to an "anointed one" whom God would send to them.

This Messiah could be recognized by Israel as coming from God, only after Israelites had learned to distinguish the God who had taught them through Moses from the gods of surrounding nations. After Babylon, however, we see no more open idolatry in Israel.

That is just how desperate was the cause that God had championed since Abraham—or since Adam, if we can read deeply enough to discern his hand. Indeed, the desperation of this cause is to be seen in the fact that apparently all would have been lost even in the second century before Christ, had it not been for the sword of Judas Maccabaeus.

According to all our records, Jesus clearly represented himself as this anointed one from God. He comes to reveal the God whose law Moses had given Israel. Jesus holds this law as so important to God and man that not one dotting of its i's or a

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crossing of its *t*'s will be forgotten until all of God's purposes in it are accomplished.

Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," comes among men to represent the "God of Battles." He *is* this God *in human flesh*, in a sense whose significance we have not fathomed yet.

VI

JESUS

JESUS taught that the meek would inherit the earth; and we have understood Isaiah as telling us in advance that he himself would be meek as a lamb.

We haven't taken much trouble to learn, from his own teaching and life, what he meant by meekness.

In his Sermon on the Mount he clearly taught: "Resist not him that is evil." To him who strikes your right cheek turn the other for a second blow. To him who obtains one of your garments by legal process, show your moral superiority to any compulsory court judgment by giving him another garment, one that is even more essential to your need. Heed the borrower. "Love your enemies."

The wise man's way of knowing, that has guided our official Bible readers for seventeen centuries, has tended to convert this principle of nonresistance into a literal absolute. This puts the teaching, like all absolutes, so far above our heads that we scarcely know what to do with it. We hear all sorts of ridiculous extremes in varying interpretations of the teaching.

There is the story of the frontier preacher who presented his left cheek for the second blow of a ruffian who was deliberately trying him. Then he said: "Now I've fulfilled the gospel. Defend yourself."

Whereupon he thrashed the roughneck "within an inch of his life"—and won the respect of the settlement.

This story isn't worth printing, but for the fact that it illustrates a common failure to recognize a principle *as a principle*. It swings to the extreme of literalism, even as Tolstoi's reading of this same teaching goes to the opposite extreme of overgen-

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eralization. Tolstoi makes the principle such a universal absolute, "out-principlizes" the principle, if I may butcher language in my attempt to show how even the highest of moral principles may be ruined by a failure to see that it is *practical* and *usable* by human beings in their everyday moral strivings. Assuredly we are moved to admire Tolstoi for his valiant attempt to live up to his own understanding of Jesus. The late Jane Addams of Hull House describes the impression made on her adolescent mind when, with her parents, she attended a great state banquet in old Czarist Russia and saw Count Tolstoi and his family seated at a little side table, eating only black bread and water. He would share the life of the peasants until the peasants themselves could be free.

Another absolutist interpretation of Jesus' principle of non-resistance, one that is equally inapplicable to life as we live it, is the view that Jesus was an absolute pacifist, but that we, because of our weakness, cannot hope to be as ideally righteous as he. This is another neat way by which conscientious Christians, deluded by our traditional way of knowing, are led to side-step their responsibility to follow Christ.

I cite these illustrations of failure to understand a key principle of Jesus, in order to show how they contrast with our reading, when we are game to follow the way of common sense. According to this way of knowing, we assume that any wise teacher expects his principles to be applicable to the lives of the men he is teaching. Certainly, when we are studying a Teacher as wise as Jesus gives every appearance of being, we expect his principles to be usable. Without ceasing to be principles, which means that their bearing or applicability may be extended beyond any limits we may try to set, they are yet practical and helpfully usable rather than absolute. They are not discouragingly divine.

Look at Jesus. He *resisted evil* in plenty of ways. He walked through the mob at Nazareth that had sought to toss him over the cliff. He drove both beasts and bankers from the temple. He pulled no punches in his bitter condemnation of the priests and scribes and Pharisees. He physically hid from his enemies

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many times, to prevent them from killing him until his teaching ministry was completed. In simple truth, he did not turn his own left cheek to his foes until he was ready to fulfill "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" by accepting death at their hands.

Only then did he put his principle of nonresistance into practice. Only then did he tell his disciples to "put away [the] sword," which, a few hours earlier, he had urged them to buy with money to be secured from the sale of their cloaks. Only then did he become a lamb "led to the slaughter."

The common response of pacifists, that Jesus never used *physical* force on his foes, is seen to be a mere quibble—when we study the *role of Caesar* in the ministry of Jesus.

VII

CAESAR

THE Roman eagles descended on Jerusalem sixty-three years before Jesus was born, and the Jewish people then lived under the rule of Rome for seven centuries. Although they rebelled against their overlord many times, Roman rule had real advantages for the Hebrews. Rome bled the country by her insistent collection of taxes, but in return for tribute she allowed Herod to rebuild the temple, so important to the Jews as a unifying symbol of their historic worship of God. Rome permitted them to teach Moses and the prophets to their children in home and synagogue, and to govern themselves locally according to the Mosaic law. Only the death penalty did Rome withhold from the jurisdiction of Jewish judges; hence legal execution ceased to be by stoning and became crucifixion.

But of equal importance to the Hebrew people, and of the utmost significance in our present study, is the fact that Roman legions maintained a greater measure of external order than Israel had known through most of her troubled history. They kept out all foreign foes. Roman swords created and administered an era of peace that was essential both to the ministry of Jesus and to the planting of Christianity by the apostles.

When confused Christians say they cannot imagine Jesus soldiering, or serving as a policeman, they are overlooking the fact that the reason why he could concentrate on a ministry of teaching, and leave the military division of labor to others, was simply that Rome was then policing the Mediterranean world better than it ever had been policed before. Among the men of God whom Jesus cited as preparing the foundation for his work of teaching, were warriors like David. Abraham had fought and

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defeated the "four kings." Moses had killed the Egyptian slave driver. Now Jesus can be a "Prince of Peace" only because Roman "princes of war" are maintaining a veritable "peace of the sword" in which he may fulfill the word of Isaiah that "a king shall reign in righteousness."

To be this sort of king means simply that his ministry is that of a Teacher of righteousness. He has a special mission quite other than that of Joshua or David. He came, as Paul tells us, in a "fullness of time" that was propitious for this particular task. Perhaps—if you are game to speculate a little—we may assume that, had human conditions not been ripe for his teaching ministry, Jesus would not have lived when he did. Had Greece not prepared a suitable language for spreading his good news throughout the Western world and in which the New Testament could be written, and had Rome not contributed essential peace and order, God might not have appeared on earth in human flesh until another time.

We need not speculate, however. The point is that Rome and her military or police arm was a factor that Jesus certainly took advantage of for the life and teaching that has meant, and still means, more to mankind than any other. To assume that this was mere happen-so, or that Jesus was unaware of it, is to accuse him of thoughtlessness or ignorance comparable to that of shallow Bible readers today. Neither should we commit the error of supposing that Jesus was ignorant of what sort of peace Roman swords assured. Such peace differed from that achieved by Gideon or Joab chiefly by being more effective and durable, effective to a degree that permitted it to be largely a peace of the *sheathed* sword—like the best peace that any people has enjoyed even yet.

Now, with these background facts in mind, read again a most familiar quotation from Jesus: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21.)

Here the traditional interpretation of confused readers has taken this reference to Caesar as simply a clever dodging of his

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foes by Jesus, in order that he might stress duty toward God. They take him to be speaking of Caesar not because he deemed Caesar at all worthy of his notice, but merely because the question concerning the moral rightness of a loyal Jew paying tribute to a pagan emperor provided a convenient background against which to emphasize the supreme importance of rendering unto God all that the heavenly Father had a right to expect from his human children.

Such reading is a gross instance of men projecting their own trivial thinking into the mind of Jesus. It likewise reflects the relatively recent, American notion of the separation of Church and State, a separation that our inherited way of knowing has made so absolute that it deceives Christians into irresponsibility concerning national policies and world affairs, and tempts both politicians and statesmen to conclude that Jesus has nothing to teach them.

When thinking, modeled on that of our research laboratories, leads us to read Jesus in the light of his own historical setting, however, we have another think coming. We find that we must have historical and human facts in terms of which to define our problems; and we then find it essential to verify our best understanding of what we read, by its fruits, when and if we succeed in actually applying that understanding to human life around us.

Thus guided, we immediately conclude that Jesus is here recognizing an essential and legitimate role that Caesar was then playing in Mediterranean and Palestinian society, and that in this role he had certain rights that men should render to him. Perhaps Jesus was saying to his fellow Jews that the order maintained by Caesar's legions was worth all that Caesar required them to pay for it—that it was superior to any order they could expect from their own petty usurpers such as the Herods. When we study this word of Jesus against his own recognized background of righteousness under the law of Moses, righteousness commanded and enforced by the stiffest penalties, we may conclude that Jesus is here teaching the duties of citizen-

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ship as well as sainthood. Christians of our day, confronted with the problem of extending democracy to world proportions, may profit from the suggestion that Jesus is here teaching that government plays a worthy and altogether essential role in human life. Should this be a correct interpretation of his reference to both God and Caesar in one sentence, then, instead of looking upon government as entirely separated from their religious and moral interests, Christians may learn to give it whatever attention may be essential to guide its operations into a progressive harmony with the Church and all that she represents.

And if we are wise, we shall not accuse Jesus of being ignorant of certain uses that were made of the money collected into Caesar's treasury. Our minds will not go blank with emotion when some historian reminds us that Caesar used government funds to subsidize brothels in the city of Rome. Such practices were so common in that day that to assume Jesus' unawareness of them is to hold him a consummate ignoramus.

Was Jesus, then, knowingly urging the Jews to let their money be spent for the vicious practices that Caesar's treasury supported, in order to secure the social order enforced by his legions? There is only one straightforward reply to this question. Jesus was urging precisely this, if we can bring courageous hearts and clear heads to our reading of the only records of him that we have.

Was this immoral on his part? Certainly it was no more a reflection on his moral character than was involved in his acceptance of the title, "Son of David," when David had been an adulterer and murderer as well as a battler for the Lord. And we should not forget Jesus' recognition of the God-guided character of the Old Testament writings, in spite of their frequent pages that are dark with sin.

In fact, we here find reason for renewed emphasis on the age-long fact that God is game to teach men as they are. Governments are but instruments of men, institutions made for man, like the Hebrew Sabbath, rather than the reverse. Hence God would take sinful governments, along with sinful men, and work

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toward the uplift of both. Caesar's government, therefore, was not to Jesus a static and final absolute. It was but a shadow of all that human government might be and should be; but with all its imperfections it was better than barbarism or anarchy or any alternative available to the Mediterranean civilization of that day.

Thus to stress the significance of Jesus' recognition of the rights of Caesar is not to lift one finger of meaning from the latter half of the verse we are studying. Men should also render unto God all things that are his own. Indeed, we are led to ask, what, in the concrete, are God's things? Are they ceremonial sacrifices and offerings? the shed blood of bulls and goats? Not unless we wish to make Jesus more primitive morally than Samuel, and degrade him far below prophets like Amos and Hosea. Does the teaching: "Render . . . unto God the things that are God's," refer to the duty of church attendance and glib reciting of confessions of faith and creedal formulas? Not unless these are strictly held, and actually and successfully used, as means to the overt achievement of fair dealing and Christlike righteousness in our relations with neighbors and foreigners, with friends and bitter foes.

When we consider God's deep interest in his human children, and his purpose to establish his kingdom of righteousness and loving fellowship on the earth where they live; when we recall that the aim of government is to "establish justice" and "promote the general welfare"; we may conclude that there should be nothing fixed or absolute about the separation of Church and State. Under such practical and undogmatic thinking, rendering unto Caesar and rendering unto God lose their contrasting character, and take on the significance of supplementing each other in the tasks we all have to do in the present warring world. In a book published several years ago, I suggested "that the more democratic the State becomes and the more Christian the Church learns to be, the more will they evolve toward unity of function and harmony of organization."¹

¹*The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, page 378.

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By functional unity I mean the capacity and process of working together. Even this will not be achieved in our century. Let us beware of rejecting our traditional American procedure of making separate absolutes of Church and State only to coin a new absolute out of the *ideal* of their unity.

The point is that the State, and the order that it represents and maintains, are altogether essential to the Church. But for this indebtedness to the State the Church owes to mankind, not subservience to the State, but her full share of leadership in both politics and statecraft. Her members are both citizens and Christians. Jesus would teach them to be Christian citizens, responsible leaders in State as well as Church. Their work cannot be complete unless they strive, without ceasing, progressively to make the State no less Christian than the Church and the Christlike home.'

VIII

LOVE

SOLDIER, do you love enemy snipers?

When an army, retreating before you, leaves snipers hidden in trees and hedgerows, on housetops and fire escapes, in every conceivable nook or cranny about, above, and under the streets and alleys of towns and villages; and when these snipers, after picking off your best loved buddies, surrender readily upon discovery; do you find it easy to grant them safe conduct to the rear as prisoners of war? Or, do you feel more like reverting to the Mosaic code and visiting upon them the prescribed penalty for the violation of its commandment, "Thou shalt not kill": stoning to death with stones at the hands of all the people?

Ultra-idealistic followers of Jesus might say to you: "Your buddies, whom this sniper has killed, are already dead. You cannot restore them to life by wreaking vengeance on the sniper. You will only make a savage of yourself."

You know, however, that your vengeance is not *mere vengeance*. You know that word concerning the fate of snipers soon trickles back to enemy lines, and that if sniping ceases, for individual enemy soldiers, to be a heroic and respectable way out to the security of the prison camp, then there will be fewer snipers and less sniping. So you make an example of snipers in the hope of exploding the notion that sniping is a safer alternative than continued retreat.

Summary liquidation of surrendering snipers, however, puts a terrific load of responsibility on you. It conceives you not only as a policeman in an embryo World State; it also makes you both judge and executioner in its primitive court.

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Can you bear this moral responsibility and yet retain the integrity of your own soul? Can you serve the cause of humanity with measures so severe as the immediate execution of snipers, and at the same time preserve your own personality from moral degeneration? Or will this combined role of judge and executioner, which the degrading circumstances of war have forced on you, so cheapen your conception of human life that you will return to society with something of a homicidal mania?

This is just what war does to a considerable number of its participants. For uncounted centuries humanity has been developing culture, civilization. We train our children to be helpful, rather than dangerous, members of society. Then comes war, and, without asking your permission, we put you through a training course as intensive as we know how to make it. We train you to be as dangerous as possible. Dangerous only to the enemy—or so we intend.

But not all of you will succeed in maintaining the distinction between foes and friends. It is trite for me to remark here that crime waves follow modern wars. The most tragic question before you as you fight—a question far more serious than the possible loss of your life or of your legs or eyes—is this: *Are we, Soldier, making a criminal of you?*

Be sure that if we do—if you *let* us do this terrible thing to you—we shall know no way of protecting ourselves against you, when you come home, but to incarcerate you in prison or asylum, or perhaps electrocute or hang you.

This possibility is so terrible that I should prefer not to write about it. But it is a possibility just as real as the facts that the statistician counts. When the moral guiding stars of mankind are blurred, as they have been blurred for most of our century by the breakdown of the traditional way of knowing that we inherited from the Greeks; and when we have not yet discovered the surer, common sense way of truth and life that God has been trying to teach us through Jesus; we leave you tragically alone with your moral burden. Thus alone, Soldier, it is possible that you—or you—or you—may come home from the war with soul

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so crushed and personality so gone to pieces that, in our ignorance of what better to do, we shall only break you further on the wheel of our penal system.

It is possible that this tragedy may hit any one of you. It is *certain* to hit many thousands of you.

Can Jesus do anything for you, on the brink of this horror? He can!

Does Jesus have any message that will save you and your buddy from this unspeakable tragedy? He does!

He says to you with all the simplicity and power of truth that comes straight from God: "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES!"

Right here I venture to assert a judgment that I expect subsequent centuries of Christianity to justify. On no one point has our intellectually paganized Church done you such great harm as in giving you the impression that Christian love for God, brother, or neighbor is primarily a matter of benevolent sentiment, something that exists and operates *inside* the Christian.

This interpretation of Christian love was perhaps inevitable, so long as church officials were reading the Bible largely *for* their fellow-Christians, and completing their definition of love by a process of sheer reasoning. Since reasoning is an act that goes on within the thought processes of the reasoner, he could testify only to the sort of love that he found there. No one will object to noble sentiments, even as we have no criticism of precise thinking. The trouble arises when we *stop* with this inside half of our impulse or thought, and deem it unnecessary to carry either sentiment or conclusion out into an experiential course of overt action.

Such an inward conception of love reveals its weakness when we progress from loving neighbors to loving enemies. Love for enemies, as a genuine sentiment or inner leaning of heart, is an emotion that Christians have attributed to God and Jesus. Possibly they have been correct in supposing that rare saints, such as Francis of Assisi, could really feel that way toward cruel persecutors.

I'm not sure. This is all rather beyond me. Only let me say

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to you that I can't help wondering if anyone ever loved enemies in his heart solely. Possibly it is only my hardness of soul that blocks my comprehension of what love for enemies could possibly be, if we define love as basically a matter of inner good will. But I'll make it stronger yet. I doubt if even God loves his enemies that way.

Let me repeat: the Bible presents our clearest picture of God. When we study the report of God that we find there, we discover that God's love for his human children is always guided by wisdom and tempered with justice.

If we can read the Bible in simple and practical fashion, we get a truly usable report of God and his dealings with slowly progressing humankind. We find God guiding men in a way quite comparable to the way your parents guided you through childhood to manhood. Your parents made mistakes, and plenty of them, which you can now discern. You can likewise distinguish their wiser moments, when they succeeded in building into your character lasting principles and patterns of conduct.

Now which, among your childhood experiences, most clearly portrays the love of your parents for you? When they loved you indulgently?—when they humored and spoiled you?—or when they sternly required you to behave according to the highest standards that they knew?

And did they succeed in getting you to accept higher principles of conduct, and build them into your life habits, without sharp admonition and occasional corporal punishment? We need not embarrass ourselves by making honest confessions to too many of our buddies; but we will agree that, in the long run, the love of our parents for us is most evident in those experiences where love was guided by broad-gauged wisdom, and where perhaps it was temporarily hidden by strict, and sometimes even painful, requirements.

Civilization tends to increase parental requirements of children. An early missionary in Africa reports that one of his remarkable observations among primitive tribes was the infrequency, or even absence, of anything like parental discipline of

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offspring. There was little about the hut for the young to get into. Moral standards were so simple that children nearly always acquired them spontaneously without any specific teaching or direction from parents.

Now what is the Bible story of God's relations with men, but an account of God's continuing efforts to *civilize* them? He is trying to teach us to be civil in our dealings with one another, irrespective of differences in nationality, race, or economic status. And when in some remote future he may succeed in teaching our progeny how to build his principles into an earthly social order that Jesus called the kingdom of God, do you not suppose that our children's children will then look back on us and wonder at our barbarism? Undoubtedly they will see less improvement between Joshua and World War II than we are pleased to suppose.

When we learn to study the Bible for ourselves, we shall conclude that God was loving his human children even before their creation, in making their natural earthly home dangerous, deadly, inherently challenging to them. Kinder environment would have made utter weaklings of us long ago. Neither is there any necessity for supposing that God had become delinquent in his regard for the tribes of Canaan when he ordered Joshua's conquest of their homeland and their own extermination. Compared with Israel, whose people had made small beginnings in hearing and learning from God, Canaan stood condemned by a culture that showed no promise of accepting divine leadership. And Canaan was situated at the crossroads of the ancient world, from which God's teaching could best spread. Hence her land, rather than some other, had to be taken as the promised land. Even with the initial advantage of original, central location, God's program of teaching men has met such formidable resistance that its contest with worldly interests already headed toward World Wars III, IV, and V is nothing less than desperate.

And God was in no sense unjust to his chosen people, when, again and again, he judged thousands of them profligate traitors to his program, and gave command to such responsible leaders

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as the sons of Levi: "Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." (Exodus 32:27.)

As I said before, men could not achieve the highest moral culture in a universe created by God without knowing God and consenting to let him teach them. Prerequisite, then, to the sort of civilization that would most effectively civilize, in the sort of world that this is, was that acquaintance with God that we have called monotheism. And the establishment of monotheism among free and stubborn men already loyal to many gods and pagan practices, was an undertaking so difficult and lofty, so desperate and sublime, that severe judgment upon failure must needs accompany loving and patient encouragement of every forward step.

Love dares to judge. Love takes the responsibility involved in condemning those who oppose its high and determined course. Love is thus strong and all-conquering, if it is patterned on God's love for his human children.

"What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8.)

"Require" is a strong word. "To walk humbly" is to be teachable. It is to consent to learn still higher requirements.

"I hate, I despise your feasts [of ceremonial worship]. . . . I will not accept [your burnt-offerings]. . . . Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (Amos 5:21-24.)

Here is our God of love *hating* and *despising*—judging in utter condemnation those Israelites who "have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes—they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor." (Amos 2:6-7.)

Soldier, the freedom you are now fighting for is the freedom to judge and be judged by the unprejudiced courts that are manned by your fellow-citizens. These fellow-citizens are your full equals when they learn to judge you by the teaching of Jesus: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and

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with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.” (Matthew 7:1.) Thus also with you, when you judge your buddy in the Army or out of it. We accept the principles under which we judge, in their moral bearing on ourselves.

This is the teaching of Jesus, whom God sent to men because he loved them so. This business of judging both the other fellow and ourselves, in one act of judgment, is a heart principle of our democracy.

How does it apply to you and the enemy sniper?

Well, you ruin all possible application of it, if you take your role to be merely that of a killer, whom zealous “noncoms” have trained to be as vicious as possible. This is mere savagery. If we have no higher purpose or procedure than this in the present war, we have no moral right, higher than the bare right of self-defense, to be fighting Hitler at all. It is this low conception of war and your part in it that breaks the sanity of some of you. Your own souls revolt against it. The homes from which you come, and the ideals you carry from them, cry out against the butchery you are compelled to perform. Deeply conflicting impulses are all that it takes to drive strong men mad.

But if you and your officers learn to see your role, and the work that you must do, in the broad perspective of its connection with the purposes of God—if you can connect your duties on the soil of the occupied countries of Europe and the Far East with those of Gideon and Elijah, then you will be both a better soldier and a more righteous citizen.

To adopt as your battle cry, “The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon,” will have deep meaning for you. It will mean that you accept the full leadership of the God of Gideon and of Jesus. Hence you will see, beyond the horizons of battle, not merely the war to be won, but the sort of peace that men of good will are seeking. You will see yourself not merely as an avenging liberator of conquered peoples, who might take their liberation so meanly as to create only a new balance of power that would invite World War III. You will recognize yourself as more truly a peace-loving policeman, appointed and commissioned by that

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world state that exists only in our ideals as yet, but which we have called the United Nations.

To conceive your duty as that of a policeman, an officer of the peace, will remind you that knowing when to sheath your sword is fully as important as being ready to draw it. Skill as a swordsman—or as a machine gunner or bombardier—will be essential to the accomplishment of your task. So will generosity and justice in governing the peoples of any zone you may wrest from the enemy, whether it be the enemy's fatherland or provinces that he has overrun. So likewise will justice be essential in your treatment of snipers.

Where do you sweating chaps of the sod-footed infantry come in? First of all, don't you forget that the policeman usually walks his beat. We have nicknamed him Flat-foot because he, too, is in the infantry.

You are the boys who will be invited to mop up snipers. You will be the combined judges and executioners I mentioned. Maybe the spot you are on is so much like that of Joshua's men that it would be just soft to take snipers prisoner. Maybe such weakness on your part would result in death for more of your buddies. Perhaps a later sniper, who had not been dissuaded by examples you had made of his predecessors, might get you. You will have to be the judge.

You are not to blame for the fact that we have placed this excessive burden of moral responsibility on you. It is too much to ask any man to be sheriff, judge, and executioner all at once. But you can bear this load as a savage or as a Christian.

I mean just that.

You can be as Elijah before the condemned prophets of Baal, slaying because justice demands it as a grim necessity. Or you can be as Hitler's Gestapo agent, killing the sniper as the Gestapo kills a tortured Jew, with sadistic delight in blood and brutality.

Choose ye whom ye will serve: the God of Elijah or the Wotan of Hitler. This choice of Gods will mean many things of highest import to you, now while you are hunting down the sniper and dodging his bullets, and after you return home. For be sure that

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it will be no honest choice for God if you should later turn against him.

But if you choose God now, it will mean that killing will be frankly recognized by you as a terrible necessity—an exceptional task temporarily unavoidable, but which you faithfully and co-operatively (with all your comrades and allies) are working to make really avoidable by your own sons.

Then, with this vision of broad responsibility in your mind, and with a loyal prayer in your heart asking God's forgiveness for all civilized men—forgiveness for the sin of sluggishness: that we have not yet outgrown Joshua's day as far as Jesus must have intended that we should in nineteen centuries—you will possess your own soul even as you execute the sniper. Without hatred, as painlessly as possible, and only when there is no other way, you will do what is immediately necessary to build a world order of justice and fairness in which your son may dwell good neighbor to the son of the sniper.

Killing snipers as Elijah slew the prophets of Baal means much more than a state of mind within yourself as you do the hated task. Merely to feel like Elijah, by a flight of directed imagination, would be hypocritical self-righteousness and nothing more.

No, sir! You must learn from Jesus how to love the sniper effectively, successfully, even as you kill him. This means that you must let Jesus teach you that love, when he uses the word, means love at work—love put into practice. Something definitely more than wishful thinking is required of you. Wishing the facts were otherwise, and that you didn't have to kill the sniper, won't save either his son or yours.

Effectual love is the love that keeps hammering away at the just *cause* that it champions. You can talk it up continually with your buddies—this great cause or purpose to extend democracy for the peace of all mankind. Put it in every letter home. Write it to the editor of your home-town paper. He'll be glad to print your letter. Maybe you would put it something like this:

"See here, you fellows at home! We're killing men only to

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abolish a system that drives men to kill. The sniper got pushed into this no less than we. He's the goat for somebody higher up. Let's smash the system that makes snipers. Let's reach across national boundaries with the same sort of law that finally did away with war and killing between Kansas and Missouri, between our southern and our northern states, and which, though less specifically stated, has also abolished war between the United States and Canada."

You can say, and you should help your local editor to say for you: "Here, you boys along main street can do a part of this that we at the front cannot do. You can see to it that only those men who are really studying the issues of world-wide security, and are game to translate ideals into measures that achieve justice for fellow-citizens, allies, and enemies are elected to office in either state or nation. You can and you must send to Congress only those men who have learned how to love our enemies with a love that both restrains and wins. We have to restrain enemy soldiers. We must win their children."

In short, the love that "suffereth long, and is kind," but which "never faileth," is love that does plenty to those who stand in its way. To love one's neighbor as oneself does not mean to let the neighbor call signals continually. It means a co-operative give-and-take of mutual criticism and helpful suggestion that gets the job done. True love is known when doing bears fruit in consequences.

Love for enemies takes its cue from successful love for neighbors. It has never meant, for those who let God teach them, anything like lying down and letting either a spiteful neighbor or a bloodthirsty enemy do his deadly will. The love that restrains him and checks his destructive course at whatever cost is the love that is most enduringly helpful to the enemy. If his name is Legion, the cost may be great both to him and to those who effectively love him. It cost God the agonies of Golgotha to love his sinning, rebellious children. It has cost the children countless wars, two now of world proportions.

Love for enemies, therefore, certainly means punishment of

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war criminals, as we have called enemy leaders who order the execution of fallen airmen or who command atrocities against civilians or prisoners of war. But it does not mean punishment without trial. And remember that trial means *fair* trial, in which the accused may be represented by counsel and where he may plead any mitigating circumstances in his own behalf. If you could, you would much prefer bringing the sniper before a military court, whose sentence would be duly executed by a firing squad, than to do all of this yourself.

After World War I, we allowed the Germans to make a joke of the punishment of war criminals, simply by leaving both trial and judgment to them. Obviously they had, and would have, no law covering such cases. And now we hear concern expressed because we lack precedent, and even courts, to try Hitler and his gangsters.

Make an unearthly absolute out of precedent, and of course you won't find any. I tell you there is wealth of practical precedent in every civilized land for setting up whatever courts may be necessary to try war criminals, provided we realize that both precedent and procedure need to be adapted to new aspects and circumstances in the new situation. The United Nations of the World is now in process of being created, with "Articles of Confederation" or Constitution, courts, and police. We can appoint trial judges to set up courts under the auspices of the United Nations to try each war criminal at the scene of his crime—plenty of precedent on this point. At the same time, we can provide appellate courts to review the proceedings of the trial court, where any defendant may appeal his case—if he can delay execution of sentence long enough to get to this appellate court at all.

I mean, by this appended clause, to admit that many trials at the scene of such crimes as the murder of whole village populations, or the massacre of Jews by wholesale measures, will undoubtedly be most summary. Perhaps they will be as hasty and informal as frontier justice in our own pioneer West, or as crude as a Hebrew avenger of blood striking down a manslayer

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who was not sufficiently fleet of foot to beat him to a city of refuge. I tell you it is rough stuff to string up a horse thief to the nearest cottonwood limb, or to let right of trial depend on flashy footwork. But both of these primitive procedures evolved into later democratic order. I am saying simply that all honest attempts to build United Nations court machinery to mete out fair and stern justice to war criminals will be steps toward an ordered and peaceful world, steps that we shall not need to take again. I can say this, because this is the sort of love for enemies that we learn from God, when we let him teach us through his prophets and his Christ.

All this looks far beyond your immediate situation as you confront enemy snipers; but the prospect of it, as a goal to work toward, will materially help you now. Your love for enemy snipers, just now, will be infinitely costly to you. And it is your duty to make it even more costly to them. But the end that that love seeks will be worth the cost, when and if it bears fruit in a democratic world order that progressively eliminates both wars and snipers. It is the intelligent, courageous, and persistent driving toward this ordered world, this loyal push toward building the kingdom of God among men, not your inner surges of emotion, that makes an effective, modern Elijah of you.

I don't doubt your cunning and bravery in the cleaning out of snipers. But have you the brains and the moral courage to face the folks back home in repeated letters and persistent columns in your Army journals, until you drive home the conviction that they must forego *all* the monetary profits of war, in order that your love for enemies may *win the peace* while your weapons win the war?

Jesus is challenging you, amid the fire and sweat of battle: "Do you have what it takes *thus* to love your enemies?"

IX

DEMOCRACY

You don't have time to read a learned discourse on political science. Just look at Jesus and the backing that God prepared for him through Moses and the prophets.

Israel's Declaration of Emancipation from Egypt made her twelve tribes a nation under their own government. The writers who record the establishment of this government tell us quite plainly that God guided Israel through the whole process and gave her the Ten Commandments, which was the constitution under which he provided also a list of more detailed enactments.

This giving of law by God did not result in a code so new and heavenly that its provisions were wholly strange to the Israelites. They could have made no use of such unearthly law as that. God's giving apparently meant that he guided Moses in a singularly wise and selective codification based on Semitic and Egyptian experience. His guidance may have contributed to the code a significant forward reference and have provided it with specific bearing on Israel and her needs. But here, as throughout the Bible, God appears as a Teacher sufficiently wise to expect his pupils to leap forward to the unknown only from a take-off securely grounded in the known.

Now it should be both interesting and helpful to us to examine the history of Israel that we may determine what sort of government God would suggest for human beings on this earth.

At first, under Moses, Joshua, and the judges, this government operates with a hand-to-mouth sort of spontaneity that is more refreshing than illuminating to hasty readers. Primitive Israel, so recently freed from irresponsible slavery, appears as a child playing with the toys of full-grown men. Her government

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is not *her* government yet. Whether we take it as given to her by God or borrowed from the lands of her ancestry or sojourn, she needs experience to make it work as her own.

Noteworthy is the fact that neither Moses nor Joshua, nor any of the fifteen judges, is ever called *king* by Israel. Not one of them seems to have been bitten by the bug of royal ambition. After his victory over Midian, the people offered the kingship to Gideon and his "son's son also," but Gideon replied: "Jehovah shall rule over you." (Judges 8:23.) All this in full face of the fact that there was wealth of precedent, both in Egypt and among the sheiks of their own ancestry, to suggest autocratic roles to Moses and to each of his successors.

Take this any way you want to, and let skeptics say as much as they please about difficulties of transmission down the centuries, the fact remains that a chain of writings, whose authors honestly think they are guided by God in some significant sense, provide our fullest record of a people so virile that they have preserved their identity through centuries of indescribable persecution and scattered wandering without any established geographical home. And with the straightest of faces, this record reports that the Hebrews began their national history with several centuries of government that was popular in the sense of being spontaneous and apparently blundering, meeting each day's issues when the day itself brought them. Only later, and against God's better judgment (I Samuel 8), did he grant the people's wish for a king "like all the nations."

What sort of government is it that is popular, spontaneous, and blundering, and which has only God as its king? To describe this government in Israel, our traditional theologians have used another word that is not found in the Bible. They have told us that Israel's government was a *theocracy*. They meant by this that God was its Ruler—its only Ruler. Hence in asking for a king "like all the nations," the people of Israel had "not rejected [Samuel as their judge and prophet], but they [had] rejected [God], that [he] should not be king over them." (I Samuel 8:7.)

All right, when God is your only king, what sort of govern-

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ment do you have *on earth*? There is no hint in the Old Testament record that God comes to earth to do his ruling. What he does is to "call" a leader from among the people, who wins their loyal following as he meets the crisis then confronting the group. For each new crisis there was a new leader: Moses for the escape from Egypt, Joshua for the conquest of Canaan, and even less durable roles for most of the judges. Neither leader nor people show much capacity to maintain their respective responsibilities of leadership and loyalty. The idea conveyed in the term "theocracy" seems to be that this spasmodic government was what God intended.

I doubt it.

Viewed from longer range, for God to maneuver a people into a situation where they have no ruler but himself, but where he does not undertake to rule by coming to earth or adopting any device such as incarnation to make himself an earthly Autocrat, simply leaves the people to rule themselves as best they can, by electing or choosing to follow whatever leader they wish. If they believe in God, and accept as true the judgment that their basic law or Mosaic constitution was given by God, they will doubtless choose that leader whom they deem most in line with God's purposes. The point, however, is that it is they who do the deeming and the choosing. They do it periodically, now, and again, and again. God does not do anything purely *for* them. Even his "calling" of the leader, as in the case of Gideon or Samuel, or even Moses, must be printed in quotes; for it amounts to nothing unless the leader *accepts* the call and then has his acceptance accepted by the people.

Now what government do you have, when the people choose their own leaders, and follow each leader just as long as they wish, and no longer?

That's right. You hit it the first time. That's just what we mean by democracy: rule "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Historians have traced Western democracy and its rebirth in America (from which it has been spreading south and east and

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west now for one hundred sixty-nine years) to the Protestant Reformation and its insistence on every man's right to stand as an individual person before God. Now when we read the Bible for ourselves, we find that we have traced democracy to a source some twenty-six centuries earlier than the Reformation, to Moses and to God himself.

When popular ambition demanded a king in Israel, during the judgeship of Samuel, we observe no real exception to the embryo democracy we have just noted. It was the people who asked for a king. It was they who accepted Saul upon Samuel's (God's) nomination, and who later cried out for his replacement by David:

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands." (I Samuel 18:7.)

When David approached the end of his life, his deepest concern was whether the people would accept Solomon as his successor. And upon Solomon's death, it was the people's disagreement over which of his sons to accept as king that resulted in the division of the kingdom between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. So throughout her history, monarchy never became fully naturalized in Israel. The pull of her basic law toward no king but God supported an inherent love of liberty among her people.

Thus it is far more accurate to call the Hebrew nation a commonwealth, or even a democracy in its early stages, than to name it either monarchy or theocracy. The deep kinship between the rebirth of democracy in the Western hemisphere and its origin in ancient Israel is revealed in the fact that the inscription on our own Liberty Bell quotes Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

One reason why Western Christians have traced their democracy to the Protestant Reformation, rather than to its original source in Israel under Moses and the prophets, is the fact that Jesus emphasized the broader and deeper principles of righteousness involved in each person's direct relationship both to his

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fellow men and to God. This direct, personal relationship to God he taught expressly. He left the larger bearing of all principles growing out of righteousness in the form of *implication*. We have already noted how much he implied in his recognition of Caesar.

But the deeper reason why the Christian Church leaned so exclusively toward monarchy, prior to the Reformation—and why powerful Christian groups still exhibit underlying sympathies with monarchs and even Fascist dictators—we find in the fact that the first Christian converts from the Greco-Roman world had been living under autocratic rule for so many generations. Roots of democracy in the Greek city-states and in the short-lived Roman Republic were by no means deep enough to offset or replace autocratic habits of mind in Gentile Christians who gradually superseded the apostles and their fellow Hebrews as leaders in the Church. In fact, these converts from paganism Hellenized and Romanized the Church.

One of my teachers was fond of pulling a big word on his students. He said that theology has always been “transcendentalized politics.” By this he meant that Christians have thought of their relationship with God in terms of their experiences with their fellow men. Since the king was the greatest and most powerful man that Christians knew, from the second century to the Reformation, they tried to honor God by conceiving him after the king’s likeness. God was literally King of all creation. They missed the figurative meaning of Bible references to God as a king reigning in righteousness. “All authority . . . given unto” Jesus after his resurrection they took to be the sort of authority that kings then exercised over their subjects. It was arbitrary authority; and of course this made both God and Jesus arbitrary Autocrats.

These Christians of Europe of the Middle Ages, then ruled exclusively by monarchs, overlooked entirely the far more significant meaning of the word authority—assuredly more significant to us of the twentieth century—that conceives authority as that influence exerted by *one who knows* and can verify and demonstrate his knowledge by generally observable consequences. We call this

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latter sort *scientific* authority. It has so little in common with the arbitrary authority of the autocrat or dictator, or the dogmatic authority of church official, that it would be better if we had an entirely different word for it.

We might speculate that God could doubtless exercise arbitrary authority over men if he so desired. Having such power, God would use it; he would dishonor himself if he didn't. This is exactly what our theologians concluded, when they were modeling God on European kings.

But when you and I read the Bible for ourselves we find that God is not this sort of God at all. We see that he restrains his power in the interest of human freedom, in order to develop moral character in his children. We discover, then, that the only authority that he exercises over men on this earth is the scientific authority that challenges men to learn and achieve for themselves. When they thus consent to learn from his teaching, they do it because they so choose and by expending their own effort, not because God has them under any sort of compelling thumb-screws.

Now this deeply rooted democracy in the background that Jesus specifically accepted provides an illuminating commentary on his recognition of Caesar. Caesar is better than any other government then available to dwellers around the Mediterranean Sea. There is nothing halfhearted in Jesus' willingness to live and work under his rule. But even more affirmatively Jesus champions "the law and the prophets" of democratic Israel. Here he has an evolutionary principle capable of progressively transforming the government of Caesar, and periodically dethroning successors of Caesar in various nations down the centuries that were to come.

Thus Jesus is a social and political evolutionist, rather than a revolutionary. He declined all efforts to make him an earthly king of Israel, in spite of the popular notion, patriotically held and frequently urged by his disciples, that this was exactly what the Messiah was to be. To have assumed political rule of Palestine would have meant rebellion against Caesar. Rather than

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foment insurrection or revolution, Jesus proceeds by planting principles in the minds and hearts of men. These principles then grow, but not solely of themselves. They develop and do their work only as men comprehend them and freely utilize them in persistently remodeling governments to meet their own ever growing ideals.

This is a noble paradox. Caesar plays a role essential to the ministry of Jesus, yet that ministry lays down principles of applied righteousness that are capable of progressively dethroning Caesar and all his autocratic imitators down the centuries to our day and on into the uncharted future.

You and I today are participants in this ever expanding industry of building and enlarging the kingdom of God on earth. We have now discovered that it is a *kingdom* only in a figurative or moral sense: that God has sought from the beginning to have us make it as democratic as our wisdom and our good will permit.

There can be nothing fixed or static about democracy that operates under the guidance of wisdom and good will. Indeed, I suspect that our grandchildren will be saying that democracy is not democracy unless it is progressive in a truly evolutionary sense. We may well rejoice in the achievements of our fathers, but we pay them the highest honor when we keep on developing the order of freedom they bequeathed to us. The more we think about it the more we may find ourselves convinced that the greatest threat to democracy arises from our failure to keep its specific measures for promoting the general welfare of all men growing to match the steady progress of mechanical invention and chemical discovery. Invention brings new adjustments and procedures into the industrial and economic structure of our society, and our political organization is frequently hard driven to keep up with these rival areas of our common life.

“New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;

They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth.”

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Just to start your inventive brain cells working to bring, and keep, our governmental machinery in the United States abreast of the machines you are now using against the legions of Hitler and Tojo, I'm going to venture a few lateral passes, that skilled political scientists and jurists may perhaps intercept to score against me. But maybe I can break up the opposing line of complacent conservatism so you may score later.

Why shouldn't we amend our Constitution with the stipulation that defeated candidates for both the presidency and vice-presidency, whose party polled as much as (shall we say?) ten per cent of the total popular vote cast, should be declared elected to sit in the Senate for a term of four years as Senators-at-large, with the same salary and speaking and voting privileges accorded to other Senators? By this means we would assign to defeated candidates for these two highest offices the responsible work of constructively advocating any cause that ten per cent or more of our population held important. Such a device would make more serious and responsible the work of national party conventions—even of conventions of significant third parties. By it we would implement the loyal opposition to the party in power, giving its opponents a place in the government that should keep the elected administration more on its toes to serve the people. Important defeated minorities would thus have their spokesmen on the floor of the Senate speaking for them day by day. They would not be restricted, until the next election, to representatives of states or districts where they might have chalked up victories.

Or, maybe you'd rather try to score with a different lateral pass. (These passes are lateral in the sense of being aside from my special field of competence. Forward passes are what democracy needs from you.) For several decades we have watched the executive branch of our government grow in prestige at the expense of Congress. I needn't stop to specify the evils of this. I think one of its chief causes, however, is the fact that both Representatives and Senators are elected to represent limited sections of the country, while only the President and Vice-President are commissioned by their election to speak for the country

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as a whole. Is it any wonder, when questions of national rather than merely sectional import arise, as they have so frequently since 1910, that the men who can speak for all the people tend to steal the show and put truly great men in Congress at such disadvantage that they do justice neither to themselves nor to their states or districts?

Now I am convinced that the various parts or sections of our country need effective representation in Congress. We might redeem our House of Representatives by reducing the number and enlarging the districts of those elected on a territorial basis and selecting other members to represent industrial or economic groups. And while we're at it, we might just as well make greater men of our Representatives by electing them for terms of four years instead of two. In short, I'm thinking that territorial sections and industrial cross-sections of our population might well achieve more effective representation by fewer men—particularly if the prestige of the whole legislative branch of our national government were further vitalized by one more measure I here offer for your consideration.

Why not amend our Constitution to limit the states to one Senator each and elect a proportionate number of Senators from the country at large? The exact number could equal those selected by the several states, or it could be any fraction that you might deem essential, with state-elected Senators, to provide an effectual legislative body. I take it that these Senators-at-large should have powers and salaries equal to those of their state-chosen colleagues, but that they should serve for terms of four years, to correspond with the term of the President. Hence they could more ably criticize and oppose, or more competently support, the policies of the chief executive, whichever course all or any of them might deem wise.

I offer these three wild ideas as mere illustrations of the challenge I would lay before you. I wish to suggest that the way is wide open for unlimited discovery and invention of relatively novel devices or measures, whether governmental, economic, or broadly social, by which to keep our democracy growing for its

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task of establishing justice and promoting the general welfare. Perhaps our great-grandchildren will look back upon our time and say that we saved democracy for them by keeping it growing fast enough to enable it to accomplish the domestic and world tasks that our troubled century brought to it.

X

FREEDOM

MEN surely act as if they were free. Free to be stubborn and foolish and beastlike. Free to enslave their fellow men. Free enough to surrender their freedom and live like driven cattle. Free, then, to change their minds and lift their faces from the clods of slavery. Free to die fighting for freedom rather than to live without it.

Freedom means two things that we should here distinguish. First, freedom is a quality of human nature. In this sense men are free because God is free, and has created them like himself. Or, if you freely choose the faith that God does not exist, then men are free because this quality was contributed to their nature by the cosmic process that spawned them. (Since we are here, it's a cinch we were spawned by some Cause great enough to do the trick. And to adopt this atheistic way of accounting for ourselves is to find deep sublimity in a cosmic process that could achieve a result so noble.)

When we get down to the brass tacks of daily living, however, we find this meaning of freedom too big to handle. Philosophers make an absolute of it; and then other philosophers swing to the opposing absolute, and claim that men are not free at all: that all their acts and thoughts are determined by the grinding "process of the suns," even as only those enemy bullets that happen to have your number can possibly get you on the field of battle.

I can't stop to make all this superstition very clear. We just haven't time to follow the follies that either philosophers or theologians reveal when they try to be superknowers. Certainly all believers in determinism give the cosmic process, or God,

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or whatever "President of the Immortals" may do the determining, one sizeable task to perform.

We avoid the difficulties that always arise when men try to exceed human capacities of knowing, if we note the fact that freedom as a quality of human nature is only a sort of potentiality. It is like a glacier high in the mountains, which can turn wheels only by melting and becoming a stream of "white coal."

So does this first meaning of freedom melt into a second meaning in the heat of human conduct. Here the potential quality of freedom becomes an actual capacity that shows its reality when you or I choose some course of action and then do what we have chosen. In this second sense, freedom is functional, operative. Nothing absolute about it. It runs into limits in any and every direction. We find lots of things that we are not free to do, all mixed up with other things that are in our class. So we use our capacity of freedom in making choices and at least trying to carry them out in action.

We live free in this practical sense, until the free misuse of freedom by somebody like Hirohito or Hitler invades our freedom. Then we fight. As a nation we use our freedom to choose to go to war. In order to save our freedom we freely relinquish a large portion of it for the duration. Most of you were drafted. You who volunteered did it under the compulsion of a situation that you had no part in creating. But all of you in the armed forces of your country, under military discipline and orders, are freer than if you had dodged the draft or in any way, however respectable, had avoided the call of duty.

There is nothing absolute about your nation's freedom. She in turn is limited by the policies of other nations, the ways of life of other peoples. Enemy nations force us freely to choose war, rather than to accept any available alternative. Allied nations restrain and guide our tactics, even as we help them plan theirs.

That's just how paradoxical and complicated freedom is. It is both ideal and actual. As actual, we never have it fully. As ideal we decline to live without it. As I write, you are fighting to

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preserve our ideal right to keep on making our freedom as actual as possible.

Here is the heart of the matter. When we keep the feet of ideal freedom on the ground of actual achievements, we find this working ideal capable of indefinite development. This, I take it, is what Jesus meant when he said: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

We achieve our best freedom, the freedom that we find most real and usable, by progressively learning the truth about the sort of beings that we are and what kind of physical, social, and moral universe we live in. As the world is so big and we ourselves are such complicated objects of study, we never get the learning completed. It is a matter of continual adjustment. Both the truth that we learn, and the freedom that results from our knowledge, are constantly growing. No chance to stand pat, and merely revel in either the freedom or the faith of our fathers. If we do, we lose step with our own generation.

We build most firmly on the tried truth of the past when we daringly go forward and grow, rather than merely stand where our fathers stood. Thus Jesus built an ideal structure of working principles on the foundation of Hebrew democracy, even while accepting and utilizing a social order administered by the autocrat, Tiberius Caesar. He saw that there was more freedom for more men under Tiberius than they had known under Xerxes or Solomon, or than they could find in his day with Herod or in any lapse toward barbarism. In territorial scope, that measure of freedom provided in the order enforced by Caesar's legions outreached the farthest borders of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

But Jesus recognizes neither territorial nor social boundaries that may limit the freedom that he advocates. Handicapped soon by a foreign (Greek) way of knowing, his principles of applied righteousness and operative truth are yet capable, within four centuries, of overflowing Roman frontiers and breaking the crusted layers of social classes. Then, in the sixteenth century, his principles throw off part of their burden of Platonic and Aristotelian habits of thought and Roman forms of organization,

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and begin a course of building for greater freedom that leaves Caesar far behind. Now there was no dike that could hold the surging tide of freedom. Democracy is reborn. King John accepts the Magna Charta. George III gives up Thirteen Colonies, and his successors grant complete self-government to all but one of the major remaining British colonial possessions. The same principles of freedom dethrone the Louises of France, the Czars of Russia, and (for fourteen years) the Kaisers of Germany.

Here you and I come in. We discover that the freedom achieved up to now has been largely by and for the economic "middle classes," those whose material needs have been made secure beyond the anxieties of day-to-day labor and recurring periods of unemployment. Of course, there is no rule against anyone climbing from the bottom to the middle, and sharing this freedom from want and fear. Such a climb is by no means easy, but it has been done. Ability, "pull," sheer good luck, contribute to it. But a clear mark of our present stage of achieved progress is seen in the fact that this boy at the bottom of the economic or industrial ladder does have to climb to be free. He is not free where he is.

Standpatter brothers of our middleweight, comfortably secure, home-owning classes think this welterweight laborer should let well enough alone, and be content with a job when times are good at wages fixed by the generosity of his employer. Why rock the boat?

Somebody should break the news to these conservatives that the boat is already rocking in a second world war. Woe unto them, and to all the rest of us, if seasickness should prevent our hearing—and comprehending—this news.

The fact is that political and economic conservatives of our Western civilization have stopped their ears and confused their powers of understanding by the notion that freedom is only *political*. If a man *has* the vote (colored boys in our southern states?—sh-sh-sh!)—why should he wish more than a *chance* to get a job?

Expand Jesus' principles of freedom so all these boys at the

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bottom may be free to *have* both jobs and votes and you might interfere with the freedom of the middleweight fellows to become millionaires. They usually make their swollen fortunes by paying "bottom" workers less than their labor is worth, and selling goods to them and the general public at a safe margin of profit above cost of production. Fixed at this level, prices drain the purchasing power of the public, and then goods accumulate on warehouse shelves. No use to manufacture goods when nobody can buy them, so factories shut down and workers are laid off. This is depression. Nobody wants it. But it comes periodically because of the greed of middle-class producers and the investors who finance them. They try to make larger profits than they need to live comfortably as neighbors with their fellow men—larger profits than the continuing prosperity of their industry can endure. So they create depression and bring suffering on themselves and on all below them in the economic framework of society.

You and I know human limitations well enough to understand why the middleweighters of our present society should be conservative. They have achieved their own freedom to be economically secure. Naturally they are now skeptical of further progress. They are exactly like the lords and barons who, having won their own freedom from the Crown, were then afraid to free the serfs on their feudal estates. They were blind to the foreseeable truth that these serfs would become the fathers of our present middle classes, and that they would then be helpful citizens and comrades in the shared life of society. It is now clear that, in two world wars, these children of former serfs have saved the very lives of the sons and daughters of the castle.

Social and economic conservatives should have more faith—more discerning faith—in Jesus. His principles of freedom, based on the most everyday sorts of economic and moral truth, work quietly and unobtrusively. But they do work. There is no stopping the process of truth, when human minds continue to grasp the capacity of this truth to enrich their lives and better to nourish their children. There is no checking the course of freedom so long as there are men to rejoice in the gifts of body and soul

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that freedom brings. But these principles of truth and freedom, pulsing at the heart of the ever coming, earthly kingdom of God, are characteristically evolutionary, as we have already noted. They become revolutionary and violent only when too many of us grow fearful and try to sit on the lid.

If our present middleweight conservatives will climb off the lid of progress long enough to get a perspective survey of what their own freedom really did to the sons and daughters of the feudal lords who so reluctantly granted that freedom, they will be greatly reassured. They will see that to free the slave is to free the master—from the repulsive, degrading task of slave-driving and from the whole, weak social system that had bound him to responsibility for his hovel-housed slaves.

Less figuratively, these timid doubters of ever growing freedom will see against the background of history how, in the present war, they are now preserving the whole civilization toward which the order of feudalism, "when knighthood was in flower," was moving. Neither castles nor knights would last long before Hitler, were it not for the labor and valiant fighting of men and women whose fathers the lords of the manor so reluctantly set free. It should now be abundantly clear that in freedom there is strength for all, not merely for its children latest born.

Let's take a very literal illustration of how essential it is that economic freedom accompany political freedom. Political freedom to vote has long been recognized as involving economic freedom to make contractual agreements. Unlimited freedom to buy or not to buy, to sell or decline to sell, lies at the heart of our Western industrial revolution. But what reality is left in "freedom of contract" when the bargaining positions of the parties are grossly unequal? Let us suppose that one party is a great corporation and the other an individual worker seeking a job. In normal times the corporation's alternative to closing the deal at the wage, working hours, and conditions that it has proposed, is merely to take on the next worker waiting in line. The worker's alternative may be to let his children go hungry.

So we have learned, with most uncomplimentary slowness,

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that to preserve freedom of contract we must make it a working principle rather than a sacred absolute. Actually there can be freedom of contract only where there is approximate equality of bargaining power: freedom for either party to accept or reject the other's proposed terms. Incorporated stockholders imply and require incorporated workers. Every union of employers—that's what a corporation is, you know—must be confronted by an equally powerful union of workers, or freedom of contract becomes a vicious and hypocritical farce.

Just now we're suffering from growing pains in this development of economic freedom into organized *economic democracy* to match our political democracy. A prime factor in the rise of the fighter-gangster type of personality to leadership in some labor unions is the fact that unionized employers have tried to deny the right of their workers to unionize, thus compelling workers to choose between accepting jobs on terms simply dictated by their employers or following leaders capable of waging a successful fight. The atmosphere of conflict brings forth fighting leaders, even as co-operation makes co-operators.

In such a fight, third parties like the general public usually receive scant consideration—like the small nations that tried to remain neutral between Hitler and the allied peoples in process of becoming the United Nations. With federal legislation guaranteeing the right of workers to organize, we have now entered a constructive era in the growth of industrial democracy. Both unions and corporations will become, and will be required to be, more concerned with the rights of returning soldiers and of university professors. I expect these requirements to take the form of laws compelling public financial statements of labor unions—as in the beginning made in our present Smith-Connally Act—similar to the accounting now required of banks and some public service corporations.

Democracy will take a great further step when we require labor unions to be openly democratic internally, that is, in the election of their own leaders. This would involve the requirement of similar democracy in the election of corporation directors and

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officials. *Stockholders*, instead of stock, would do the voting and electing. Such laws would dethrone both czars of labor and autocrats of business. Then, indeed, would political democracy cease to be unequally yoked to a hybrid of economic anarchy and autocracy.

Now is all this, that I have called growth of democracy under Jesus' principles of freedom based on evolving truth, a trend in the direction of either communism or state socialism? Are we making a social order for you to come home to, so collectivistic that personal initiative will be smothered under the wings of bureaucratic planning? Does making your job as secure as your vote mean that the job will be served to you on a golden platter and that then you will be compelled to take it and like it?

Certainly you don't want anything like this. Such freedom to have a job would become the slavery of having your job picked for you by someone else.

Again we must back away from our inherited tendency to make absolutes of both freedom and communism. We have already seen that to be free does not mean to live like Crusoe on an island all your own. It is rather to live with human companions in a constantly changing and growing process of mutual adjustment, a day-to-day game of give-and-take played fairly.

And when we pull communism down from the blue sky of absolutism where Marx and Lenin put it—you recall that Marx took his philosophy ready-made from Hegel, chief of German absolutists—we discover communism to be not at all the bone-crushing Bear of the north that newspaper capitalists (and our own fears) have made it. Look this Bear full in the face. Punch it once. Pull it apart a bit. You will find that it's not Kipling's "Bear that Walks Like a Man," but a stuffed "bogey."

Down on a level with our daily affairs we discover that communism cannot mean the complete, common ownership and control of all property by community, state, or nation. Don't any of you try to tell me that either Marx or Lenin preached the common ownership of such articles as toothbrushes and pants.

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And while we're pulling absolutes off their thrones, we might consider capitalism. Has it ever meant, for you free Americans, the private ownership of literally everything by one person, a couple of partners, or a large number of incorporated owners? Not if you remember either our postal system or our common schools. Would you want your letters carried by competing private corporations, or would you want only one company to have a monopoly of the business and the consequent power to fix postal rates with special eye to its own profits? And which private company, institution, or individual would you wish to select the textbooks and courses you would study as a child in school—and hire your teachers? What would become of your freedom under such absolute capitalism as this?

Thus when we all climb down from our high-horses of absolutism we find that life is a great game played on a field as wide as the world. In this game you have both team-mates and opponents. You co-operate with some and you compete with others. The next day some co-workers and competitors swap roles on you. You love some of your team-mates, especially those of your own family circle, so deeply that competition takes a back seat. In wider circles you compete with your own team-mates for the privilege of carrying the ball. Finally your contacts become so secondary, as the sociologists call them, that co-operation tends to give way before competition that may be keen, bitter, cut-throat.

You don't object to competition that is really sharp. You're a good sport. You like a good game. And you can take your share of defeats. But you do want the game to be fair. You want your competing opponent to play according to the rules. In a new area where there are no rules as yet, you get busy and make them. If your opponent plays dirty, you demand an umpire. The stronger your opponent is, and the bigger his roll, the more carefully you will watch to see that he doesn't bribe—pardon me—bring pressure to bear, on the umpire.

When you come home, Soldier, you don't want a social order

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that spoils your game of life by making it no game at all. You don't want all your affairs sewed up by a few big corporations that have virtual monopolies on both goods and jobs. Yet in some fields that our economists have called "natural" monopolies (they mean "convenient" or "desired" monopolies), like the telephone business, distribution of electric current, or some branches of transportation, you want one corporation to be big enough to do the whole job. You don't want to have to run down to the drug store to call your girl, because her dad has a "Bell" phone while yours is a "Home." And you'd like to use your transfer on any line in the subway.

Thus you want companies to be big enough to provide the best service. But when they use their bigness to fix rates that keep you poor while their chief stockholders and officers go abroad every summer in private yachts, you begin to wonder if a team-mate may not be throwing the game or even playing on the other side. Again you yell for an umpire.

That's what your dads have already done. They have called in both state and federal governments to do the umpiring. Our Interstate Commerce Commission and our public utility commissions in various states are simply umpires.

In all this process we have insisted on remaining free Americans. We have retained that inherent American privilege of throwing pop bottles at the umpire. If we overplay this privilege, we get run in for assault and battery. If we exercise it with wisdom and restraint, and a decent respect for the umpire's rights as a man, we actually help him maintain his spirit of fairness.

Since the depression of 1929 and '33, and particularly when the urgencies of total war required more umpiring than ever, we have run into a new difficulty. Some of our governmental umpires have grown so big and tough they can't feel our pop bottles, no matter how hard we throw them.

Now what is an officially appointed government umpire, when his skin gets so tough that pop bottles make no dents in him? When his ears become so deafened by razzing that he fails to catch our loud and honest, but sometimes mistaken, demands

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that he call balls and strikes just as fairly on scrubs as on big leaguers? What is he then?

I'll tell you. He's a *bureaucrat*!

One real problem for democracy as it fights a world war, and as it bursts national boundaries to create a democratic United Nations of the World, is this new monster we have called bureaucracy. How great is the danger? Is democracy doomed before it?

Or, have we made another bogey of bureaucracy, by letting our habitual way of thinking expand it into an absolute?

That is exactly what we have done, if we conclude, because some of our official servants, on some of the occasions presented by depression and world war, have overstepped the power we delegated to them, that we must therefore do away with all government servants and services. We're simply afflicted with bats in the belfry if we think we must abolish the position of umpire because several of them were guilty of biased decisions.

But to keep our democracy growing at home, and to keep it spreading to bear its gift of actual, functioning, working freedom, under the guidance of truth and impartial justice, to our fellows throughout the world, we must devise ways to instruct and guide—or fire, or even imprison when he violates the law—any umpire and any other servant of the people whom we may have appointed for either emergencies or normal tasks.

Perhaps we may now and again find some situation, or some industry, where the game is already so out of hand that no amount of umpiring or revision of the rules could make a real or fair game of it. Then we may control it by the yardstick device of operating some part of it directly by an agency of the government, as we have done already in the electric power industry under the Tennessee Valley Authority. There is no question but that this device is socialistic, or communistic, if you prefer the more flagrantly misused word, just as communistic as our public schools or the thousands of city owned and operated water or electric power plants all over the country. But the yardstick device is not socialistic in any wholesale fashion. It does not

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destroy freedom by trying to make it a universal absolute. It seeks to preserve competition by making it real, rather than a fictitious and hypocritical sham.

Remember, it is democratic for free people to adopt as many communistic devices as they wish—if they choose them, and keep on choosing them, by free majority vote. If you and I can't trust the people—if we can't leave all questions, finally and repeatedly, to progressively educated public opinion—we're sunk anyway. But remember, likewise, that it is wholly undemocratic, if any device, whether it be communistic or the most individualistic conceivable, should be forced on men by a dictatorship. Indeed, it would be undemocratic to force you to vote.

We would not and we will not—indeed we cannot—return to the freer, unumpired competition of earlier, frontier stages in our own development. Rather, shall we continue to find greater and yet greater freedom for ourselves, as we learn the truth that enables us to share our freedom with others.

I'm not kidding myself, or you. Our reason for wanting others to be free is not due primarily to our benevolent interest in them. The time is now at hand when we have to make others free in order to be secure in our own freedom. We must now achieve another definite advance in building the kingdom of God on earth, or forfeit the freedom we have won thus far in the present stage of our own, ever growing democracy.

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SOLDIER, neither you nor I will get very far extending our democracy throughout the world until we realize how much responsibility rests on us. This great crusade of ours loses much of its power the moment we pass the buck to anybody, even to God. Maybe this chapter should be entitled "Theological Buck-Passing."

In recent weeks I've been hearing over the radio and reading in our most thoughtful magazines the slogan: "God knows no accidents!"

I'm not questioning the sincerity of any grief-stricken father, who may find a moment of comfort in the thought that, whatever the depth of his woe at the loss of a son in battle, God is not crushed into helplessness by the tragedy that has struck him. Perhaps he means something more like this, than that God is insulated against our calamities and heart-breaks.

Another edition of the same buck-passing philosophy, but expressed in brighter language, is the old couplet from Browning:

"God's in His heaven——
All's right with the world."

Men just haven't a thing to worry about. God has everything sewed up for good. But here are little children suffering in want or men bound in slavery! Here are buddies of yours being torn into shreds of offal and filth by modern tools of war! No matter! says this complacent philosophy. Maybe none of these are as bad off as they, or we, think they are! Maybe God is disciplining them for higher seats in heaven—or punishing them for sins committed in a former life, on earth or on some other planet!

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I must not go on without citing a third version of man's besetting sin of passing the buck to God. This one is the most famous and "official" of all. I first heard it in my own boyhood. My father would quote, not too frequently, I am happy to say, from the *Shorter Catechism*:

"God hath foreordained for His own glory everything that comes to pass."

Truly a beautiful doctrine by which men may kid themselves into assurance of their own eternal salvation! A capital excuse for twisting Jesus' word: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow" into "Don't even worry about today, or about anything that you see happening today! Certainly you don't need to worry about the other fellow's troubles! Why shouldn't he be happy to suffer, to see his children starve, or to receive any number of telegrams: 'The Secretary of War regrets to inform you—' when all this anguish is 'for the glory of God'?"

What about it, Soldier? Is somebody kidding you? Are we playing a bitter joke on you, when we tell you that you've a real job to do, a job that won't get done unless you do it? Is it just a big hunk of baloney we're feeding you, when we let on that the freedom of us all is threatened and that it can be saved only through your agony and sacrifice?

I tell you that all this talk about the necessity of heroic sacrifice on your part is just plain lying and despicable deception, incomparably cruel and heartless, if, behind the scene, any Power in either heaven or earth has everything arranged so that, finally, all things will come out right regardless of you and what you do.

I'll tell you more than this. I'm here to tell you that it is sheer paganism, a pagan idea brought into Christianity by the half-converted pagans that all of us are, as yet, to suggest that God is merely unwinding a moral ball of yarn that he himself spun in the first place, and that, therefore, he not only knows, but has predetermined, that the final lengths of that yarn will be exactly as he wishes them to be.

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I'm saying this on the basis of my assumption that if we want to know what God is, we should go directly to our fullest source of information about him, the Bible. I am fool enough to suppose that those ideas are apt to be most Christian that are most like the teaching of God and Christ that we find in the Bible, and that pagan ideas are those that are contrary to that teaching. I say this fully realizing the fact that we, who have been struggling upward from paganism for many centuries, still find it easy to read our semipagan ideas into the Bible and then read them out again.

The difference between my Bible reading and that of the traditional readers I'm refuting on this mossy old point in theology—if you can use a reminder of what I have already stressed in Chapter III—is that I don't stop with my reading, and assume that I have complete truth in Bible words, while they do. I go on through a further and confirming step of broad, co-operative, social or human experimentation, where my fellow-Christians and I strive to check, and to keep on checking without limit, both the accuracy of my reading and the meaning of the subject-matter that I read from the Bible, by the overt consequences or fruits of each in life. Such a course of scientific experimentation goes on in a human laboratory as big as the world, and it may take many centuries to bring it to relative completion. And it is never completed absolutely. Common sense knowing never lazily shrinks to knowing that claims the right to dictate what future experience must be.

But many of the consequences of human experimentation can be read and scientifically interpreted at shorter range. By these more immediate fruits I know, for instance, that my father was no subservient and slothful pagan, even when he quoted a pagan teaching. He never used the thought that God had foreordained everything for his own (selfish?) "glory" as any excuse for side-stepping his own duty to do his level best. By the context of events that prompted him to quote it, I readily caught the idea that my father took this hoary dogma to mean something like

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this: "Now that we've done all that we possibly can, we may confidently leave the issue with God, provided we stay on the job with him."

Thus my father gave me a grand start toward a more Christian theology by reinterpreting a Calvinistic doctrine in the light of his experiences as a Kansas farmer who held not lightly his moral responsibility in the nurture of ten sons and daughters.

It's this staying on the job with God that you and I must do in World War II. We are IT! Responsibility for World War III will be squarely on our shoulders, as the responsibility for this war is on the shoulders of our fathers, unless we take the trouble to think and love intelligently even as we fight.

Questions like continuing or stopping a dismal chain of world wars are not up to God. They are our responsibility rather than his simply because he has created us so like himself that now he must, and he wisely has, left all decisions for war and the building of ordered peace up to us. However securely he may watch us and teach us from "His heaven," all is not "right with the world" as long as we refuse or neglect to learn the teaching he has laid before us in "precept and example," and stubbornly decline to continue building our democratic order on beyond both the Hebrew Commonwealth and our own present attainments.

This is saying that not even God is secure, or happy, "in His heaven" while we block his efforts to answer the prayer of Jesus that his kingdom might come and his will be done "on earth, even as it is in heaven." The heart of the meaning of the Cross lies in the fact that God suffers because of human sin and rebellion, even "in His heaven."¹

No accidents for God? Let's think this through!

When God creates a natural, physical universe and provides it with appropriate laws or ways of operating, these ways become its ways in a most real sense. This is what natural scientists now find the world to be. It appears capable of running itself as a physical system under its own principles for many millions (or

¹Compare my Chapter XIII, "Golgotha," in *The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, Revell, New York, 1936.

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decillions) of years, even though, according to the second law of thermodynamics, it is gradually running down. Now things can certainly happen in a world like this that are just as accidental from God's point of view as the breakdown of a General Sherman tank may be to the engineers who designed and made it.

Was the recent outburst of lava from Vesuvius a natural happening resulting from the physical pressure of gravity and heat-expansion under this corner of Italy, or was it evidence of God's nausea at Mussolini and our own playing around with his henchmen?

Is drouth in Russia or Oklahoma evidence of God's displeasure with the people who live there or here? Jesus says God sends rain and sunshine on the just and the unjust, indiscriminately. If this means anything at all, it means that natural events have no relationship whatever with human morals or God's judgments on immorality.

Did that tower in Siloam fall and kill eighteen people because God got mad at them and pushed it over on the poor creatures? Jesus says "No," in unmistakable language.

Thus accidents in physical nature are accidents to God just as they are to us. Can a similar thing be said of events in the human world? Is God in control of happenings that follow from human choices, like the battles you are fighting as I write, even though he has relinquished control over purely physical events?

Well, if you let the Bible tell you that God created man "in his own image," and therefore free enough to disobey him and rebel against him—while he created the physical universe as he deemed man's physical home should be to challenge him and enable him to achieve intelligence and strength—you will conclude that God is in even less control of human choices and their results than of Greenland blizzards and Miami sunshine.

God's relation to physical nature is comparable to my own management of my garden and flock of chickens. His control of you and me is comparable to my influence over my son. Neither my spinach nor my hens are as free to flout my wishes as my son is.

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Now accidents happen to my garden, to my son, and to me. We mean, by accidents, happenings that we did not intend or foresee. But my son can oppose or violate my intentions even more flagrantly than did the rooster that got out and destroyed my peas. Thus my son's acts are even more "accidental" to me, in the sense of canceling or exceeding my intentions, than anything that can happen in the physical world. His acts are *so* "accidental," from the viewpoint of my control, that they outrun the meaning of the word, and compel me to print it in quotes.

I'm trying to say that this whole war is a terrible accident to God, in a sense strictly comparable to that in which my son's disobedient act might be an accident, or a wholly unintended event, to me. God did not intend or perpetrate this war. He is no such Monster of iniquity, or Super-Devil, as this. Neither did he deliberately send it as any sentence or judgment upon human sin, however just (but unwise) such a judgment might be.

If this war comes as a judgment upon our failure and stubborn refusal to learn from Jesus how to abolish all wars—and it is certainly "God's judgment" in that sense—it comes as the burnt hand comes to my son when he disobeys me and plays in the fire; not like the paddling I may give him to enforce the lesson of safety.

All of God's paddlings come to his human children in the next world; and he has wisely told us very little about them, as we shall note shortly in another chapter. With the exception of a few special, miraculous judgments of God recorded in the Bible, which our theologians have misinterpreted along with their misunderstanding of Bible miracles in general, not one judgment of God, comparable to my paddling of my son, is to be found in all history. If God did make a practice of paddling us in this world, he would interfere with our freedom to an extent that would begin the incomparably destructive work of blotting his image out of our natures. And if you believe, as I do, that to be created in God's image actually means that we bear a glowing spark of his own eternality, then you will conclude that this blotting out is a matter that God has placed beyond his own

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power. That is just how gloriously sublime God's creation of his human children is. If you believe this, you will believe that God can now no more stamp his image out of us than he can destroy himself.

Thus you and I should repeat until we learn its whole meaning by heart that World War II, and every single casualty in every one of its battles, is an accident, unspeakably horrible to God and wholly unintended by him. This war is a judgment of God on mankind only in an incidental and wholly natural sense. It comes upon us because we have insisted on playing with the fires of selfishness and greed—because we have clung to autocratic institutions in our economic, political, and religious life long after these institutions had outgrown their day of usefulness. Autocratic institutions in whatever field, held over into a time when democracy is due to take charge, feed the fires of greed instead of controlling them. Democracy curbs greed, and other unruly and unsocial human traits, under laws that men enact for themselves and enforce upon themselves.

All this political science about democracy belongs in my chapter about God's relation to nature and human nature, because democracy is rooted in Moses, God's law-giver, judge, and prophet, and because democracy continues to grow ever upward and onward through the expanding provinces and progressive court decisions of the ever growing kingdom of God on earth.

In one final word, terrible accidents, in the sense of unplanned and unintended, even unforeseen, tragedies, can happen to God because he is a *Person*. He is a purposive, Personal Creator instead of an impersonal natural law, like gravity. He is a cosmic Soul and heavenly Father, with wishes and feelings, with sorrows and hopes, with truth to teach, comparable to all that lies deepest in your soul or mine, rather than an abstract principle like mathematical equality or Hegel's Absolute—or Plato's ethical "Form" of the Good.

Indeed it is from Plato and his fellow-Greeks—supported in the nineteenth century by Hegelian idealists—not from the Bible, that our theologians got all their absolutist notions about God,

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notions that have done such irreparable harm to your fathers, and are now threatening you. The God of the Bible, the God whom we learn about from Moses and Jesus, is a God who desperately needs you and me to help him in his tasks of both war and peace. If we do our best for him, in really building his way of life into our new world order, we can decrease the number of heartbreaking accidents that he, and our children, otherwise may yet suffer.

XII

PRAYER

NOT long ago I read a short paper entitled "Gulls and Christian Gullibility." It was in a little magazine seriously devoted to the teaching of atheism. I've forgotten the name of the writer, a fact that is most unfair to him. For, in spite of the overneat word play of his title, he was intelligently discussing the likelihood that the arrival of a sea gull within grabbing distance of flyers adrift in a rubber boat on the Pacific, as they prayed for divine help, could be counted a genuine answer to their prayer.

I'd like to testify to you right off the bat that I firmly believe in the existence of a Personal God, who is both the Creator and heavenly Father of all human beings. (That is, I have formulated this judgment as a scientific hypothesis about the nature of ultimate reality, on the basis of what facts or factual roots, relevant to this question, I have been able to discover; and I expect the hypothesis to be verified [only partially in my lifetime] in no other way than by long-run fruits in human life that it may bear—fruits whose identifiable quality is implied and predicted by the character of these facts or roots. And of course the mere absence of such fruits would and will refute the hypothesis and prove my faith erroneous.)

And I believe, too, that this God eagerly listens for, gladly hears, and faithfully and wisely answers the prayers of his children. But I am honestly bound to add straightway that I found more good sense in this brief article on prayer by a convinced atheist than in the whole rash of articles on the subject that have broken out recently in our newspapers and magazines, so allergic to the dust-bearing winds of popular emotion.

"There are no atheists in foxholes!" some of your buddies have testified. And I have already suggested my own judgment

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that, in your foxhole, face to face with death and perceiving vividly the meaning and value that life assumes in the presence of death, you are more apt to read the Bible with an open mind than are scholars and preachers at their desks. Now I'll say the same thing about your prayers. Amid the stench and terror of battle, "the effectual fervent prayer" of a boy in desperate need is, I venture to believe, more likely to be heard and heeded by God than all the intoned piety of robed divines in a thousand carved pulpits.

It is only when writers loosen up their adverbs to theorize about how spry God is to jump when you whistle that they burn me up.

That's just what they make of God, a cosmic Bell-Hop who rarely lets his heels touch the floor, when they work up a fever of certainty about God as a clearly identifiable Answerer of prayer. It is fortunate for their theorizing about you and your "whistled" prayers that Germans are supposed to be praying to Hitler's Wotan and Japs through their "Son of Heaven" Emperor to various deities. This relieves God of possible confusion between enemy whistles and yours.

Please pardon me. But really this language is mild compared with what I should use to condemn all these pagan notions about prayer, and how they tend to make a pagan Idol of God, rather than the loving, teaching, judging, saving God whom Moses and the prophets show us, and who then comes to earth himself in human flesh in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth and Golgotha.

Again, we must go to the Bible and read for ourselves. The day is at hand when neither theologians, their minds filled with Greek-derived preconceptions, nor the preachers whom they have trained, can read God's teaching for us. They hopelessly befog meanings with their traditional anticipations of what is to be found in the Bible. Critical scholars are just as misleading, when they read in the light of their swing to the opposite extreme. Most of the scholars read in terms of these same traditional Greek preconceptions, but *by negation* with respect to God as identifiably greater than nature.

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Open your Bibles, fellows. It doesn't matter how much mud, or blood, or tears, you got on that page. Wipe it off. Look again. Read again and again. You won't get tired of rereading while your artillery lays down that barrage in preparation for what you are to do.

There is Jesus talking to us all. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7.) "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do." (John 14:13-14.) Stressing the teaching that his followers "ought always to pray, and not to faint," Jesus gives the "Parable of the Unjust Judge," with the conclusion: "Shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night . . . ?" (Luke 8:1-8.)

There it is. What does it mean? I suggest that here, as throughout the Bible, Jesus (or God) means exactly what he says.

Now to *mean* what one says is to say *meanings*, not merely words. I suppose we might be at a loss to figure out what Jesus means by these words, if they were the only words that our records had preserved from him.

No, we wouldn't. For if these were the only words of Jesus that history had kept for us, we wouldn't bother our heads in the least concerning them, or him. Long since, thinking men would have passed him by. Only the unthinking, whose heads are a total loss instead of ever being at a loss, might have taken these passages seriously and have sought to enlist Jesus as an aid in their clairvoyant efforts to manipulate impressionable companions by claiming to have control of God.

When we refrain from jumping at conclusions and seriously dig for meaning in these promises of Jesus, we find ourselves considering the whole context of his ministry and also his background in Moses and the prophets. The meaning of what any man says depends first of all on what he is. You have heard the adage: "What you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say."

Now, according to our records, Jesus claims to be God in

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human flesh and to be speaking for the God of all the worlds. There is little point in quoting his words about answering prayer, as bearing now on prayers that men may address to God nineteen centuries after Jesus' life on earth, unless we assume this uniqueness in his relationship to God.

We must assume, too, that a teaching as profound as his, and based on cosmic foundations so deeply laid as he claimed, is necessarily addressed to men as intelligent. He assumes that we have enough brains to consider each sentence that he speaks in connection with everything else that he has said. This includes his logical principle: "By their fruits ye shall know them." And the moment we ask the meaning of words, as springing from prior roots and expected to produce fruits in overt life, we find that we must include what Jesus *did*, as well as *all* that he said, and what he *was*, as best we can determine these from our records of him, in looking for the meaning of his assurance that God answers the prayers of those who faithfully turn to him in their depth of need.

Would the God, whom we have seen challenging men in Moses' day with teachings whose meaning so far outreaches the wilderness experiences of Israel that they are yet beyond our moral horizons—would that sort of God now hop to it in doing the bidding of our prayers? Of course not. Nobody says it as baldly as this.

The popular reporters of assured instances of answered prayer that I'm complaining of simply wax enthusiastic in their wishful thinking and center their attention on some few cases where events followed prayer specifications. Then they ignore all other cases. Indeed they probably never hear of these exceptions, or negative instances, as the scientist calls them, for these writers aren't interested in statistical comparison of answered, with unanswered, prayer. So they never know, and in the nature of the case they never could know, but what events might have turned out just that way even if no one had prayed at all. Maybe cases of specifically answered prayer are mere happen-so.

Assuredly, weary sea gulls that have flown far from shore are

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apt to light on any floating object, rather than to seek rest on a choppy sea. And changing wind currents sometimes do unusual things with shower clouds too.

But why should Jesus give such pointed teaching about prayer, if his Father and ours had created our natural world such a place of accident and happen-so that we could never know when, or whether, our prayers were answered?

Let me suggest two answers to this question.

The first reason that we can discern why God has left his answering of prayer in such shape that we cannot know, by either of the ways of determining truth outlined in Chapter II, when, or that, he answers prayer, is that if we had this knowledge, we should certainly use it to our own hurt. Then indeed would we *try* to make an obedient Bell-Hop of God. We'd be foolish if we didn't; for only fools expend energy unnecessarily, save in sport.

Praying would then, indeed, be one capital, lazy-man's way of getting our hard tasks done. In this sort of world, once we had learned to pray, we might forget how to till the soil. If God really kept on the job answering our prayers with manna from heaven, we'd soon lose our incentive to develop any and all of our practical sciences. Medical science would "go by the board." Sanitary engineering would become superfluous. Why bother to be clean, or how could our race have learned cleanliness in the first place, if we could pray ourselves well when sickness came? In fact, if God were this to us, we should long ago have degenerated into a state of utter sloth and indolence, from which he could lift us only by recalling this possibility of our knowing heavenly things to our own inevitable harm. Surely it is better that our knowledge should be fitted to our own moral stature and to our world as it is.

"No, no, you're all wrong," say these newspaper theologians, supported by the grateful survivors whose rescue they are explaining. "God would have more sense than to answer such unworthy prayers as these you have imagined. Men would soon quit praying selfish prayers if God answered only their worthy petitions."

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They miss the very heart of my point. I am saying that if we *knew* precisely when God answered prayer and when he didn't, that that very knowledge would set us calculating just where to draw the line between what we could get from him and what we couldn't. Under conditions of such important intimacy with even a human companion of superior power, men tend to become subservient and slavish. We are all familiar with cases where a stronger personality, in close relationship with another, more retiring type, tends to weaken the latter and make him still more retiring and selfless.

Now, when such degradation of personality can come to men in undemocratic, off-balance contact with dominating human companions, what shipwreck of soul would they not suffer if God had been so unwise as to have them live in such subservient intimacy with him, as detailed knowledge of how and when he answers prayer—or fulfills predictive prophecy¹—would certainly be! Though men be created "little lower than God, and [crowned] with glory and honor" in his image, this lower stature would be enough to condemn them to utterly enslaving dependence on him, should he be so unwise as to intrude himself on their independent, earthly existence. At most, God teaches and persuades us to do his will. He does not drive us. Neither does he *bribe* us, as he would be doing, if he allowed us precise knowledge when, and under what exact conditions, he answers our prayers.

Now for the second, and equally significant, answer to the why we just encountered. Jesus' promise to answer prayer is definitely qualified. It is only a conditional promise. How come that our magazine writers have so unanimously overlooked the stipulated condition, and have ignored all questions concerning its meaning? It is only petitions that are asked "in [his] name" that Jesus pledges God to answer. What does it mean to pray, or to preach or baptize or work, *in the name* of either God or Jesus?

Here traditional theologians have quite generally accepted another importation from paganism. They have actually left the

¹Compare my Chapter XII, "Foretelling Prophecy," in *The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, Revell, New York, 1936.

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impression with Christians generally that there is efficacy in merely repeating the words, "in the name of" either God or Jesus, in connection with proposed courses of action, in preambles to good resolutions, or in the conclusions of prayers. This is sheer magic. I can't think of anything more pagan or blasphemous. It profanes, rather than honors, the name of God!

Do they call any of you boys orderlies? What is an orderly? He's a chap with a special job to do. Frequently he is on the staff of a colonel or other officer. That means that he carries out the particular orders of the colonel. He runs errands for him; performs special missions. He is the colonel's lengthened arm. He is his authorized representative. He does things in the name of the colonel.

You're two jumps ahead of me already. To do anything in the name of God is to be his messenger in the doing of his will. To pray in the name of Jesus is not to indulge in magic hocus-pocus. It is to seek the greatest possible chance to co-operate with him in accomplishing his purposes on earth. It is to ask for a job on his force of kingdom-builders. It is to volunteer in his army: to aspire to the high privilege of "put[ting] on the whole armor of God" as a "good soldier of Christ Jesus."

Now does anyone have any doubt whatever about God answering prayers—hundreds of prayers of all sorts and for all sorts of worthy ends or objects—when the prayers spring from hearts and lives thus dedicated to the concrete accomplishment of his will on earth? No one will doubt it, if he really believes in God. And he will pray for everything, and for success in literally everything, that he undertakes to achieve toward the establishing of God's kingdom on earth. But this sort of praying says to God: "Not my will but thine" "be done on earth even as it is in heaven"—and *really means it*.

Whatever you really mean, you devote your whole life to. You talk it to your fellows. You breathe it as you sleep—no matter how poorly your snoring may reproduce the "still small voice." For the instant you awake you are pulsing with the enthusiasm and drive of plans to spend that day for God.

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This doesn't mean the piety of monkish garb or folded, up-lifted hands. It may mean, right now, pressing a curved finger of steel that sends a spinning bit of lead through an enemy's heart. It surely means a big contract of planning, right now, even as you fight. As you crouch beneath an avalanche of shells, praying to God that you may be spared to come home to feed your babies, you will be planning a social order that will also feed babies along the Ganges. You will pledge the eternal welfare of your soul to the God whose love you have found so essential to the integrity of your personality, that if it is his will that you should die forty years hence instead of right now, you will use every one of those forty years in a driving struggle to get his way of living into action in all the dealings of men with men. You will begin hunting for ways to redeem a generation of men who rob the poor through a selfish social order. You will pray God to help you find a voting booth and ballot box that will enable you to dethrone political bosses and their hand-picked delegates in party conventions, bosses who leave you on election day a brilliant choice between tweedledum and tweedledee.

Sounds as if I wanted you to be quite intimate with God, doesn't it? It sure' does! But there's not a hint of subservience about the intimacy I'm urging you to achieve. You aren't in God's hands as a puppet. You're a real he-man, because God made you that way. He isn't an oriental Sheik, who might want slaves fawning before him. He isn't even a General who would have you salute or click your heels. He's a Father who wants strong sons standing at his shoulder listening carefully to his teaching long enough to get the idea. Then he wants you sons of his to go out and do the job of making this sorry world over into the likeness of his love and wisdom with strong heart and able hand.

Please get me straight. I'm not even hinting that you should study for the ministry and preach. In the new era of God's kingdom that is now dawning, God will need far less talking and much more doing than we have deemed essential in the era that is now passing. Do anything that you're good at. Choose work

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that you like to do well enough to put your whole heart into it, provided that men need to have it done. Only do it as Jesus wielded hammer and saw in the carpenter shop at Nazareth.

Ask fair prices for your products. Don't give them away save in most exceptional cases. It's a violation of the Golden Rule to pauperize your fellows. Don't profiteer. Seek only that income that you can *use* for the welfare, including education and instructive, refreshing travel, of yourself and those dependent on you. Provide for your own old age until we get that matter adequately covered by broad co-operative measures of social security.

Make your work not merely a job, but a life. And the way to find your fullest life in it is to comprehend its value to others. You will live a full and joyous, shared life, with your fellow men and with God, when you catch a glimpse of how you are related to the whole enterprise of God's way of everyday dealings—a way of life that is coming, coming, ever progressively coming into the homes and shops and highways of all men.

Fellows, when you live a life like this, you just have to pray. You will pray for anything and everything that your best wisdom deems essential to, or in harmony with, the accomplishment of God's will on earth. You won't play conservative, for fear of tiring God with your much praying. You will be assured all the time that even if God answers any particular prayer with *no answer*, that that is doubtless the best and wisest possible answer.

Indeed you won't even think about answers to your prayers. Still less will you write articles for publication claiming this or that event was an answer to prayer. Only those who suffer from lingering doubts about God concern themselves with questions like these. Your living, working faith in him will prompt you to leave all such matters to him, with unshaken confidence that he can and will look after his side of the situation without the slightest need of any check-up by you. You will be assured that God does answer the prayers of his children who represent him so faithfully as truly to pray "in [his] name." It will not occur to you to wonder, or to ask, *when* or *how*.

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And with this sort of faith in God, you will find that you have to keep on praying. You may be a bricklayer or a banker, a farmer or a mill hand, a lawyer or a labor leader. But the very life of the soul within you, and the zeal and industry you expend in a truly Christlike life of co-operative helpfulness toward the neediest of your fellow men, will depend on your intimate, growing fellowship with a Companion so great and good and just—so game to fight and condemn his foes—as the God you find in the Bible.

Soldier, there is the God of Moses and Isaiah! There is Jesus, who *is*, or who represents himself to be, this God on earth!

And Soldier, here you are: a chap on whom we have piled a bigger load of responsibility than any man should be asked to carry. We did it because "all we like sheep [had] gone astray" from God's way of life so far that we brought two world wars on ourselves in one generation.

And maybe this war has left you a lonely, broken wanderer, your best friends dead, your sweetheart married to another fellow, your life and your world all gone haywire. Perhaps the war has left you teetering around on artificial legs, or in a wheel chair.

No matter how deep your personal tragedy, God is game to knock any chip of impatience or despair clear off your shoulder. He is waiting only for you to find him in the pages of your Bible, and to learn to pray one prayer:

"Yes, God, here I am. I'm IT for whatever responsibility you have to lay on me! I want to help make this world of yours as you want it to be. Show me how to keep myself in the background, as I do all I can to set the stage of life so that even the least of those whom Jesus loves may get the breaks essential to make them realize that this is your world and that your kingdom is in process of being realized in it. Lead me to see, that I may show others clearly, that the coming of your kingdom is hindered only by human ignorance, laziness, and selfishness—by our lack of confidence in you.

" 'Help thou [our] unbelief!' "

XIII

CHURCH

"**Y**EAH, I was at church Sunday. You won't catch me there again for a while. They're still saying the same old thing!"

These are the remarks I caught in a barrack shower room. The corporal who made them was in dead earnest. He was deeply disappointed. He had gone to Sunday morning worship hungering for something, he didn't quite know what. And organized Christianity had sent him away still hungry.

Soldier, I'm with that corporal. I think he's dead right. And I'm not optimistic about the Church, under her present leadership, being able to reset her table so as to feed his personality the uplifting, reorienting moral chow he's rather instinctively seeking.

Maybe he's given us a lead as to how we might awaken the Church for him, in his sharp way of putting it: "They're still *saying* the same old thing!" Possibly there is too much saying and not enough *doing* among professing Christians today.

That sentence of mine is almost as trite and stale as the saying that disappointed the corporal. Many recent leaders in the Church have pointed out this deficiency in her program, and then, in various gospel teams and with trained teamwork, they have hurried to remedy the defect.

They don't get very far because their doing is simply *doing*. It is more or less random activity because it is not inherently and directly *intended* by the meanings Christians bear from Jesus. The trouble with these good sayers and doers lies in their connections. Their program suffers from poor *linkage* between saying and doing, and from an even poorer drive shaft binding it to underlying cosmic reality as a basic source of power. I'm not waxing mystical here. I'm only insisting that programs of life

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have to fit men as they are and the world as it is, to succeed.

The message of Jesus to mankind was "good news," as he called it, primarily because it was full of *meaning*. It was a *plan* of life. It was not a plan of worship. It was not merely a plan of salvation. It was a plan of *life*, because only through the Christ-like *life* of having been "born anew," a "new creature" "in Christ," could anyone hope to achieve what Jesus called salvation. By this plan of life Jesus meant that we should intelligently *relate* our personal and social lives to the Personal God and creating Father whom he insisted is the heart of all reality, and whose nature determines our natures and the sort of conduct and order of society essential to the fulfillment of the traits that lie deepest in us. Is it not simply beyond argument that, through the development of those capacities in us that are most like the heart of the world in which we live, we could hope best to find life's highest enrichment and happiness?

Back there in my second chapter I tried to show what a confusing babel of words our traditional way of knowing inflicts on us, in claiming to be able to convince us of known truth by merely reporting in words the conclusions of reason. The church service our corporal complained of was apparently an example of this verbal procedure: confident and assured saying what leaders in the Church are sure of primarily because their predecessors have been repeating it for seventeen centuries. (Note that I didn't say nineteen. I have already showed that in the Church this Greek mode of thinking and knowing began to supersede the mode of Jesus and the prophets only toward the end of the second century.)

Now simply because this Greek way of thinking stops with the precisely worded report of its best reasoned conclusion, and omits all further check by the consequences of doing, it necessarily involves the assumption that correct doing will more or less automatically follow correctly formulated conclusions. Write truth in letters of fire on the heavens of public opinion, and your work is done. You can be confident that human hands and feet cannot help but do what heads and hearts clearly know and feel to be

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true. Men ought to know clearly what they have memorized from the words of our wisest men in the past. And surely they *feel* its truth vividly, for they have worked at this memorizing since their earliest childhood. Thus knowing the *words* of righteousness and truth, we can rest assured that they will be good citizens in both nation and world.

Alas, Soldier, it isn't so! We have learned better than this in all our physical sciences. We don't expect anybody to learn mechanical things without a laboratory where, after he has read the best books on the subject, he may then see and hear and feel and do. Neither do we expect anyone to acquire mechanical skills without long and expertly guided practice. But in our moral or human fields, where we try to discover and teach the difference between right and wrong—areas where we now observe our whole civilization threatened, and our free, democratic way of life driven into a desperate fight for its very survival in a war that is costing you such immeasurable suffering—here, on questions infinitely more important than anything material or mechanical, we still assume that reading and listening to lectures and sermons will accomplish the work of teaching and learning.

Alas, Soldier, it isn't so! This is precisely the mistake Woodrow Wilson made in World War I. Most of us shared responsibility for his error. We were so blindly optimistic that we felt we could leave everything to such a superstatesman as he. We thought his ideas so charged with sublimely undeniable truth, and spoken with such eloquence and convincing power, that they would make the world safe for democracy without too much effort on our part. We were fooled by the overconfident thinking of our inherited Greek philosophy. Because this philosophy has served Western civilization as its basic intellectual foundation so adequately for twenty-four centuries (our civilization is at least five centuries older than Christianity, you know), we thought it would last forever.

Alas, Soldier, it isn't so! We won't get going in a new era of history—we won't avoid World Wars III, IV, or V—until we find, and construct for ourselves, a new philosophy to serve as a new

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foundation for the new and higher civilization that mankind is now ready to enjoy. I'm just fool enough to think that the germ principles of this new philosophy are already before us in the laboratory procedure of modern science; and that we can learn how to get this procedure loose from our physical sciences and out into the highways and fields of human life, if and when we consent to learn from Jesus and the prophets that this, too, was and is the way of discovering and verifying truth that God himself deems best for his human children, and which he has had before us all these centuries in the Bible.

Likewise, in Chapter II, I warned against the animal-like, two-step procedure of immediate *doing* upon the prompting of difficulties that are *felt*, but not precisely defined or clearly thought through. One instance of this is the gospel-team hustling of Christians that I just mentioned. They are zealous to do something for Christ, but are unaware of a crucially important fact that I must stress by repetition. They miss the fact that doing that is unlinked to the nature of things as they are by roots that run clear down to the very heart of the world and to the nature of the God whom they believe underlies all reality, is unworthy of intelligent human beings. I said that these earnest Christians sense the fact that their saying fails to get across in doing. But they do not see their failure as caused by an inadequacy in our inherited Greek philosophy.

Rather than being skeptical of our traditional philosophy, they are simply bewildered—vaguely and dazedly bewildered. Still less do they specifically realize what is actually the truest report of their mental condition: that they have become skeptical of all philosophy, skeptical of all attempts to “relate the coal scuttle to the universe.” For very few people take the trouble to study what everybody takes for granted; and you can be sure that a philosophical foundation that has weathered all storms for twenty-four centuries is taken for granted. But here in our present warring world are millions of well-meaning people—in terrible trouble—unaware that the foundation of their social order needs

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rebuilding, because they are not even specifically aware of the character or even the existence of that foundation. *So they just hustle!*

You have another beautiful example of this two-step jumping from a felt need to an energetic doing something about it, in the activities of your USO. Here is doing, largely unconnected with the cosmos-grounded and glad, humanity-centered *meaning* of the thought-challenging, heart-arousing words of Jesus. The USO is good. Mighty good indeed! As a faithful dog, that saves his master's life, is good. It *does* things for our corporal in two-step fashion—and I'm not referring to the rhythmic way he may glide across its floor with a heart-warming companion. I'm referring to the fact that the USO does not pretend or try to feed that which is supremely human—most really human because most Godlike—in him. It no more attempts to fathom the deeper *significance* of its worthy service than the dog understands the meaning of his heroic deed.

In that second chapter I commended the common sense way of discovering and verifying truth that makes use of all of the five steps I there outlined. Now I want to emphasize again—and relate to the Church as the worst organized, most bewildered body of the best people on earth—this besetting foolishness of mine: the foolishness I have acquired by headstrong and independent study of the Bible: the fool conviction that this simplest of all ways is the sort of thinking that we find in Moses and the prophets. It is actually the way of knowing that is specifically taught by them. I have already cited Moses' criterion of the true prophet, the one whose teaching is followed by the thing or course of events that his words had anticipated. Let's take time now for Jeremiah to add his testimony: "When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Jehovah hath truly sent him." (Jeremiah 28:9.)

And this way of knowing by evidences that are followed through to consequences runs through the teaching of Jesus from first to last. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

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. . . By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:15-20.)
"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God." (John 7:17.)¹

Now the characteristic mark of this ancient (and modern) scientific way of knowing is that, while it acts as quickly as it has to, to meet the difficulty the knower feels, it urges him to keep his logical bearings as he moves from feeling to doing. It requires him to keep his connections, by consistent, logical steps, first in identifying what sort of problem this felt difficulty presents; then in intelligently figuring out the best way of solving it; then using all his brains critically examining this proposed solution, in order that what he then chooses to do may be intelligent doing, whose consequences or fruits could teach him whether he has the correct solution and whether he made any slips in his thinking about it.

Don't tell me you haven't time for all this. If you do, I shall need to remind you again that this is the way you (and your ancestors) have always done your solving of practical problems—until diminutive successors of Socrates and Plato came along and enticed you with the notion that it would be simpler just to take their reasoned solutions, ready-made, without any test and without any real thinking at all, *by you*. And then consider the fact that that brain of yours is the most wonderful mechanism in the world. It works with the rapidity of greased lightning. On any difficulty that is really getting the range of your jaw, you run through all five of these steps of common sense thinking maybe a dozen times before I could write down what you did. In the midst of your thinking, you don't even know you are thinking, until the job is all done. Only then could you survey your steps and decide whether or not you had hit on the best way of doing that particular thing. If mature criticism, from your fellows as well as yourself, confirmed your solution, then your invented way of meeting that specific difficulty would be generally

¹I don't have time for details here. But I have published a bare introduction to Jesus' way of knowing in a book of 452 pages, *The Experimental Logic of Jesus*, Revell, New York, 1936.

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adopted; and henceforth reflective thinking concerning it (so long as the situation should remain sufficiently unchanged to occasion no new difficulties) would be replaced by habit, inculcated in successors by education.

Believe it or not, fellows, this is the way we've built all the culture we have up to date. We've done it better mechanically thus far than we have socially and morally, as I just pointed out. And even this mechanical progress was nearly all made in the last three centuries, after Galileo and Newton broke loose from the authoritarians, who had imprisoned and burnt many of their predecessors.

Now the time has come when we must dethrone the absolutists and their dogmas from authority over human life. We must now be as free to find and live the good life as we are to make and operate machines. The musty old notions of accepted authorities in politics and economics made World War I and World War II. Will you let them make World War III for your children?

The mossy theology of traditionalists is exactly what made this church service so sterile that your corporal went away starved in soul, his hungering personality not knowing where to find the challenges upon which it feeds, save in the smutty language and unwholesome and unsatisfying conduct that besieges your army life on every side.

Mossy theology, musty politics, rusty economics—our dogma-petrified *human* ideals and ways fumbling around trying to operate and control the latest machines of twentieth century invention and engineering. We laugh when we see a Connecticut Yankee pushed back into King Arthur's court. Why don't we laugh when Socrates and his young friends stand in our modern factories or try their hands with our machines of war? Perhaps we would, if our eyes weren't so heavy with weeping. We are, indeed, just this ridiculous, trying to guide twentieth century machines, determine their efficacy, and insure their use in the interests of human welfare, with the ethics of Socrates.

But here is Jesus and the God whose kingdom he announces. Jesus doesn't try to play the role of an autocrat or dictator in

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the realm of ideals. Neither do any of the prophets who precede him, nor the apostles who follow him. He doesn't try to dictate to you, nor to tell you *what* to do. He is content to suggest great principles of life, and then leave the living to you. In the terms of current psychology, he lays *stimuli* before you. The *response* is up to you. You are free. Here is a way of life with which he challenges you. Take it or leave it!

His principles of life are many and rich. They provide a wealth of material which you can use in every stage of the full thinking Jesus urges you to do. But unless *you* do this thinking, it won't get done. He won't do it for you, because he can't. He can't think for you, and have you, through his thinking, learn how to solve any of your life problems, for yourself. He can't run a race for you, and then rejoice in you as the winner. His highest wish is to have you, and all your fellows who share the earth with you, win in the great race of life.

How is all this going to help the Church? Not an easy question, is it? I began this chapter with doubts about the Church being able to feed your corporal, under her present organized leadership. And then just a minute ago I spoke of authoritarian theologians who need a good treatment of dethroning from their traditional reign over our moral life. You can put two and two together. But don't tell anybody *I said* you were to be the dethroners; for it was Jesus who thus condemned traditionalists who said much and did little, and who showed by this failure their inability to "discern the signs of the times" in which they lived.

"Woe unto you lawyers also! for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." (Luke 11:46.) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew 21:43.)

You may find it profitable to consider that Jesus does not mean here that merely Jewish defenders of accepted dogmas may have

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the kingdom of God taken from them. His condemning declaration just as relevantly covers any and all men who may be too wise in their own conceit to be able to learn his challenging way of life.

I'd like to assure you that I'm not in the dumps. I'm neither a pessimist (or *worstist*) nor an optimist (a *bestist*). I'm a *betterist*; and I like to say it in plain English, rather than the Latin, *meliorist*. I think we're on the horizon of a great new era in history and civilization. I think the Church of Jesus Christ will rise to her opportunity, and her Master's call, to lead mankind in this new era, as she led Western civilization for so many centuries in the era that is now closing. But she will have to arise—with Jesus.

And don't get the notion that my hopeful anticipation of a new Christian era would need to mean revolution in the Church, in any violent sense. I must insist again that the good news of Jesus is *evolutionary*, rather than *revolutionary*, in its basic character and working. It is patient and forbearing, yet persistent. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world." (1 John 5:4.)

Many of the youngest and wisest of the authoritarian leaders in the Church are already seeking a way out of the discouraging dilemma they more or less clearly sense. They will gladly turn from the rationalistic philosophy of Plato and Socrates to the philosophy of Jesus and the prophets, with its final appeal to the laboratory of human living together, once they see that this is the heart of the trouble. It will take a deal of study on their part. Unlearning and relearning is harder than learning in the first place. They will have to reread their Bibles, and rethink God's teaching, from Genesis to Revelation. Then they'll have to revise their doing to dovetail logically with their reread Bible. But this will be such an enriching, rewarding experience that they will love it and will find new and abundant life in it, once they get going.

Meantime, what is the Church? How, and why, did it come to be, in the first place?

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Maybe the Church got started in the days of the apostles—like Israel as a democratic commonwealth grew up under Moses and the prophets—because God couldn't teach men without teaching men. A few men, just as human as you and I—count Enoch here, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph—caught a bit of meaning from God, as a result of his persistent efforts to teach them. This meaning gripped their souls, and they eagerly taught it to their families and a few companions. First thing they knew, and as naturally as the springing up of a boys' gang or the United Nations opposing Hitler co-operatively, common interest in sharing the new life, which gradually grew from these God-stimulated meanings, brought a social group into being. This group was first the nation of Israel. Its leaders were the prophets. Later, after the life of Jesus on earth, his apostles and their converts drew together just as spontaneously in the Christian Church. God was in it. He established it by virtue of the fact that, through the prophets and Jesus, he taught the principles that led men to establish it.

Growing up in this free and spontaneous fashion, and on such a foundation as democratic Israel—a foundation whose democracy was greatly strengthened by Jesus' principle: "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister;—and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:43-44)—the Church was bound to be inherently *democratic* in character and organization. It is understandable that, when a way of knowing that gave autocratic prominence to authoritarian theologians should usurp leadership in the young Church, not yet two centuries grown, it might well eclipse her native democracy for seventeen centuries—fourteen, perhaps, for Protestants, if we make reservations that distinguish their democratic *ideals* from their practice in aristocratic organization and dogmatic thinking. But erroneous habits of thinking, even seventeen hundred years "aged in the wood," can be changed when the sufferings they bring on men and women and little children finally become unbearable.

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So what is the Church? Or better, who are those that comprise the very reality that the Church is?

You are they! So am I. So is everyone who tries loyally to follow Jesus. Each one of us—each one of you—is IT! Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman—you are the Church, if you are Christian.

When you come home wearing on your body the scars that Western civilization, built with more regard to Socrates than to Jesus and his way of life, has inflicted on you, it may be that you will have caught enough of the meaning of God in human history, even God on earth in the historical Person of Jesus, to arouse in you a loyalty to him that will make truly applicable to you the words of Paul: "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." (Galatians 6:17.)

If you achieve a similar loyalty to the God who challenges men from Abraham to Paul, and who now challenges you and me, you will be new creatures in Christ Jesus. His stripes will have made you so whole in spirit that you will conquer not merely the enemy you now confront, but also the temptations to degradation that surround war itself and you as its soldiers. And when you return home you will be zealous healers of many ills that afflict our culture. Not "of the world," you will yet be "in the world" as workers for freedom and justice for the least and last child of God on earth.

This will not be an easy task. To do your best work as Christians you must be clearly identified with the Church. Unless you are in the Church, and there find fellowship and achieve organized teamwork in doing the will of Jesus under the guidance of his wisdom, your efforts would largely come to nought. Single-handed, you can be only a guerrilla fighter for the Lord.

Yet you will have real difficulty getting into harness with some church members. With them you will have to be charitable. You will find the Church suffering grievously from a hang-over of authoritarianism and its way of knowing. Traditionalist leaders will expect you to take the ceremonies of the Church as they take them. You will have trouble, however, accepting these

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ceremonies as sacraments that *directly* work good results. You have already outgrown such a relic of pagan magic as the notion of the *immediate* saving efficacy of religious ceremonies. To be baptized or to participate in the Lord's Supper, simply because God has told you to, will seem to you like accepting dictatorship comparable to that which you have been fighting to destroy.

We'd better call a spade a spade. It is our inherited, authoritarian way of knowing that has largely made the sacraments or ordinances of the Church into procedures that are simply ordered. That's why they call them *ordinances*. If you slavishly obey them as "God's orders," on the authority of official spokesmen of the Church, these ceremonies tend to make you God's puppet and the Church's puppy. Sure', you're a good puppy! You wag your tail contentedly and you roll over at the snap of some Churchman's finger. You roll over—and sleep morally—while World War III creeps up on your children.

I'm here to tell you, that once you get Jesus' way of knowing by roots and fruits hitting regularly for you, you will recognize that these ceremonies of initiation and worship, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, are *means* toward the end of achieving Christlikeness in your own personal life, and in establishing Jesus' way of living on earth. They are not ends at all. They have rich value for you, when and if you catch their symbolic, dramatic meaning. They are teaching devices. They teach in the indirect way that works of art and the drama teach. Like the movies, they teach you as they entertain. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are devices for visual education, education by dramatic participation, that Jesus, the greatest of all teachers, has suggested. From them you learn something of the deep, moral meaning of his death and resurrection.

It is your progressive grasp of this meaning of the whole life and teaching of God through the prophets and Jesus that makes you a Christian. But intellectual and moral grasp has not even begun for you until you put these beginnings of knowledge into practice. Laboratory confirmation of textbook theory is as essential in human life and all of its sciences, as it is in physics and

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mechanics. You hear God's teaching enough to heed. You heed enough to start doing. Yes, you and your buddies in organized teamwork. Your initial doing brings assurance and knowledge of God that inspires you to learn even more fully and stimulates you to do yet more effectively. There is no end to the upward way, while life lasts. That is the greatest glory of the road to heaven, whether or not you should live to help make heaven on earth.

Soldier, it is a great and glorious fight. The opposing forces are deeply entrenched. And they are in the Church, where, as one of our oldest fifth columns, they have been feathering their nests for seventeen centuries. Verily Jesus was describing our situation when he remarked that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matthew 10:36.)

To save our children we must team up for a new world. Thus to team up for Jesus is to *be* the Church of Christ in process of its own rebuilding.

XIV

HEAVEN

SOLDIER, they've killed thousands of your buddies. Where are these buddies now?

This is a question that refuses to leave its perennially recurring place at the forefront of human attention. The hope of life beyond this earthly life, whatever its earliest roots in primitive interpretations of dreams and like superstitions, is a hope that has survived all refinements of growing culture. Our wisest men in all ages have either given this hope affirmative place in their philosophies or they have treated it with profound respect.

I once heard the venerable Edwin Markham say that his poem, "The Crowning Hour," outlined his serious dream of heaven and the reunion with friends and loved ones he expected it to include. He paints a vivid picture of finding a sweetheart of his youth, and of learning, through the delights of renewed companionship,

"That to turn from love is the world's one treason
That darkens all the suns."

After tracing the joys of such a reunion through a total of ninety-six highly figurative lines, Markham concludes thus beautifully:

"As we go star-stilled in the mystic garden,
All the prose of this life run there to rhyme,
How eagerly then will the poor heart pardon
All of these hurts of Time!

"Ah, yes, in that hour of our souls dream-driven,
In that high, white hour, O my wild sea-bride,
The tears and the years will be all forgiven, . . .
And all be justified."¹

¹Find this poem and read it. You will be glad I mentioned it. It is in a little book entitled *The Shoes of Happiness*, published by Doubleday, Doran, New York. Virgil Markham, son of the poet and owner of the copyright, has kindly given me permission to quote ten lines.

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I once read this poem in a group that included a good widow, who had been the second wife of her departed husband. I should have sensed the situation better. The poem was a complete flop with her.

But she would have found no incentive to jealousy in Markham's lines had she known, and fully accepted in her thinking, the word of Jesus that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." (Matthew 22:30.) Here Jesus undoubtedly means that all that is physical, in our relationships with one another, will be left behind us on this earth. Hence there will be nothing to mar the family reunion in heaven even of the proverbial "James Brown," who had "a gay time when [he was] in Boston" with his succession of "beloved" wives.

Wait a moment! In telling us that there will be no sex in heaven, Jesus is not saying there will be no survival of the many beautiful things that sex does to our personalities. If I may go far enough into the "bare implications" of Jesus' teaching here, I would suggest that in heaven mothers will be gentle mothers, and fathers will be strong fathers. We won't get them mixed.

I break the order of my thought just a little by quoting from Jesus at this point. I seek merely to remind you that both Markham and Jesus are evidently thinking of immortality as *personal* in a sense that involves both our awareness, each of his own identity, and our ability to recognize and know the personalities of others.

Theories of immortality have been proposed, in which continued life is reduced to the human soul returning to the common spirit-substance of the world, which these theorizers call God. This would obliterate personalities and all personal identity. It even denies the personality of God. He becomes a substance more like matter than a choosing, acting Person. And under this theory there would be no more continued existence (it wouldn't be *life*) for the soul than for the body, whose dust returns to indestructible matter. Most thinkers, in fact, have deemed such continuance not immortality at all for the sort of *personal* creatures that we are.

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I wish I could give more space to arguments for enduring life beyond death, that have come from non-Christian sources. I mean future life in which personalities will survive in an identifiable sense. There are whole libraries of them. They boil down to something like this: When the wonder of existence is so great, how can the wonder of *continued* existence be enough greater to paralyze our ability to face it honestly and consider it without negative bias derived from our natural, physical environment?

Although the notion of some sort of survival after death is widespread among primitive peoples, it is perhaps not universal. At least, it varies so much in form and clarity that it is sometimes hard to identify. But it is certainly a common belief.

Some such idea may well have existed among the Semitic ancestors of the Hebrews; but we know little or nothing about it because its traces in history have been eclipsed by our more definite records from the times of Abraham and Moses. Here, in these records of Moses and the prophets, we meet a startling fact. The idea of life beyond the grave, at least in detailed or clarified form, is *missing*. Definite teaching concerning a future life is absent from the Old Testament records, where we might expect to find at least a preface to the emphasis Jesus gives it.

From historical sources outside the Old Testament, however, we learn that a teaching concerning further life for the dead began among the Hebrews about the time of the Babylonian captivity. We then find the doctrine clearly taught by that "Puritan" sect, the Pharisees, during the life of Jesus. To them the future life was a continuation of earthly, physical existence in such a literal sense that Jesus supplemented their teaching with the important qualification that we have already quoted from Matthew. Luke reports the same teaching more fully: "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (Luke 20:35-36.)

Here, finally, in Jesus, and only in the New Testament records

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of his teaching, we have eternal life specifically taught. Jesus proclaims it as a fact, known by him to be true. He links it with the eternality of God and claims the authority, essential to his assertion of it, as derived from the intimacy of his own relationship with God.

On this teaching, as at other points, he supports his words with deeds. He recognizes the necessity of backing theoretical lectures with something in the way of laboratory confirmation. All of our records report a few cases of his restoring life to bodies just as dead as those of your comrades killed in battle. And the records show witnesses reacting normally to these miracles, in terms of their own historical and social background. They say: "A great prophet is arisen among us; and, God hath visited his people." (Luke 7:16.)

Then Jesus himself rises from the dead, on the third day after his crucifixion. He convinces those who had known him best of his identity. It took several "appearances" to do it. His disciples are recorded as skeptical, in spite of their familiarity with the Old Testament, in which miracles had played occasional (but actually rare) roles; and in spite of Jesus' prediction, beforehand, that he would arise. In short, the news was just too good to believe—too astounding to accept—until repeated demonstration blocked all other responses.

In the apostle Paul we have the resurrection of Jesus used as the prime argument in support of the faith that all men may find happy eternal life through learning and heeding the "Way" taught by him. If you can accept the testimony of witnesses that Jesus rose from the dead, Paul insists that on this historically founded judgment you may base a confident belief in a life beyond death for yourself. If you cannot believe that Jesus thus conquered death, then you "are of all men most pitiable" (I Corinthians 15:19), for there isn't a shred of evidence to assure man's hope of immortality comparable to this human testimony concerning one unique event that happened on a particular Sunday morning near the city of Jerusalem.

I run over the story of this basic point in Christian faith and

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teaching thus hurriedly; and I state its conclusion thus bluntly; because I am eager to get to the heart of the question as it bears on you, Soldier, advancing this morning along your hedgerow, where you may meet death at any instant. It is the shocking manner in which death comes in battle, and the fact that it hits you chaps so prematurely, that forces it on our attention. Really we have no right to be indifferent to it, even in times of peace. Death is so painfully real, as the ever impending fate awaiting all of us, that only the shallow thinker, struggling against an inferiority complex derived from his sense of strangeness in the yet unexplored and untamed world of science, would try to ignore it.

A highly specialized scholar, whom I count a good friend, limits his thoughts concerning future life to a hope. He has felt driven by his studies, in this transition period between eras, to renounce his earlier Christian faith and adopt a philosophy of earthly humanism combined with cosmic agnosticism. This is the way he put it: "I've lost all *assurance* of a future life. The *hope* won't die."

His word "hope" is aptly chosen. It correctly states the attitude of men in general, regardless of race or religion. Likewise concerning his word "assurance." It accurately expresses the contribution of Jesus and his apostles to human thinking on the question of immortality. What Jesus adds to a widespread human hope is a measure of *assurance*, not proof. Not even practical or scientific proof in terms of consequences.

I should make this point more specific. When Jesus miraculously restores life to the daughter of Jairus, to the son of the widow of Nain, and to Lazarus, it was life that each of them was bound to lose in another death before many years. In no sense did this mighty work prove that there would be survival for any of them beyond final, physical death. Perhaps we could say that in these miracles of raising the dead, Jesus vetoed only what we call *premature* death, not death itself.

His own death at thirty-three or thirty-four years was likewise premature, as we measure life expectancy. And when he convinced

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his apostles that he was alive again, he limited his postresurrection association with them to nine or more brief appearances during a period of nearly six weeks. Then their anticipations of further contact with him were terminated by an appearance near the Mount of Olives that ended in his being "taken up; and a cloud receiv[ing] him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9.)

Now the teaching of Jesus concerning future life consists of words that he probably spoke in the popular Greek of his day, and which were written down later in our earliest New Testament Greek manuscripts. Can this sort of testimony, handed down over a sweep of nineteen centuries, *prove* to you or me that your buddies who have died in battle, are now alive?

The answer is simply *No*. And apparently only the overconfident philosophy of ancient and pre-Christian, pagan Greece could have deceived Christian leaders into claiming *proved certainty* for the doctrine of immortality as they formulated it and wrote it into their creeds. Their inherited philosophy, acquired in childhood long before their conversion to Christianity, led Christian leaders of the second, third, and fourth centuries to claim more certainty than Jesus had sought to teach his followers. This pre-Christian, non-Christian wisdom, thus imported into the Church, has confused Christians ever since.

We get out of this woods of confusion the moment we return to Jesus and the Bible and note the fact that all that Christians have a right to claim regarding a future life, on the authority of Jesus, is *assurance*, not proof. Reject Christianity, as my humanist friend has done, and you have only a *hope*. It is a great and undying hope, which you share with countless men. But if and when you become a Christian, you allow Jesus and his apostles to add to this hope a remarkable measure of assurance.

I can't take time to examine this assurance and show in detail how it originated in the minds of the first Christians and operated in their lives. I suppose their experience was something like our natural confidence that we can do, or may learn to do, what we see a good friend accomplish, particularly when he tells us that we may learn to follow him to the place he has prepared

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for us. (John 14:2.) At any rate, the first Christians did receive from the teaching of Jesus and the example of his resurrection a confident assurance that they would meet him again after death. This assured faith of theirs is a matter of history. The Church is its landmark, its historical monument. The very existence of the Church would be hard to explain without it.

But why only assurance? Why should not God in human flesh, while on earth in the person of Jesus, have provided his human children with indisputable *proof* of eternal life?

I happen to know two answers to this question.

The first lies in the very nature of proof. Things can be proved to you and me only when we can understand them. Proofs that do the job for us have to fit the sort of minds that we have, and are. Because we are limited in all our capacities, it follows that proofs can never be absolute *to us*. They can never sew up questions so completely as to preclude the possibility that some later discovery might not require us to amend our very best former judgment.

This is saying that practical, experiential proving is the only sort of proving that really convinces us. Since experience goes on day after day, its evidences keep coming in. Experiential proofs, therefore, are capable of unlimited confirmation through repetition. Indeed, our confidence in them stems largely from our ability either to re-enact their essential features or to observe their continuing effects in life from day to day. This is crucially important. Even our experiences of earlier years get mixed with our daydreams unless we can renew their significant points at least on some of the occasions when we may wish to do so. What could our best loved books mean to us or teach us, if we couldn't reread them?

Then not even God could prove the reality of a future life to such limited knowers as you and I, by any once-for-all demonstration such as the resurrection of Jesus. The only way he could prove it, would be to arrange for our lost loved ones and your killed buddies to come back to us from the dead now and again, repeatedly throughout our lives, and establish their identities to

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us in ways essentially like the ways in which we knew them before they died.

Now look at the moral consequences that would follow from proofs that meddled with our world so flagrantly as this. What would it do to our lives to have these departed sages dropping in on us either on their initiative or ours? Let us suppose they are polite, and do not come unless we invite them. Would not the mere possibility of our calling them in for counsel, when we thought we needed expert advice, make utterly spoiled children of us all? How could we ever solve the problems of extending democracy to our present world, if, instead of facing these appalling difficulties ourselves, we were continually calling Jefferson and Lincoln from the dead to pamper our laziness by telling us exactly what to do?

If they were available, we would call on them, you know. We are not such consummate fools as to run the risk of tragic error if someone who had been over the road were within hailing distance to give us the benefit of his experience. Our candidates for office would surely overwork these departed worthies. Each would try to steal a march on rival nominees by getting to some weary shade first. And even the wisest of our great men of the past would lack the experience essential to render their advice truly applicable to our problems.

The saving beauty of this picture I have painted is that it is self-contradictory and even theoretically impossible. A world in which our generation could be morally degraded, by calling Jefferson or Lincoln from the dead to solve its problems, would be a world where there never could have been a Jefferson or a Lincoln. For the initial possibility of their achieving wisdom or greatness would have been blasted in their earliest youth by this same morally enslaving world.

Thus my first answer to the question why God grants us only assurance, rather than proof, to support our hope of a future life, is primarily logical in character. It is based on a study of what it takes to prove things to the sort of heads we carry around on our shoulders. But it turns out to have not merely logical

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significance. Its moral implications are even more directly important to us.

The second answer to this question *why* is distinctly *moral*. If God proved the reality of a future life to us, he would be *bribing* us in flagrantly immoral fashion.

This is a problem that has worried our greatest moralists down the Christian centuries. They have written so much about it that they palsy my efforts to treat it briefly. Suffice it to say that if God proved immortality to such limited beings as we are, he would put us in a situation where we could not help but come to him as seekers of reward. Then indeed would we follow him, but as slavish, fawning puppets with open hands. Our greed would grow with the receipt of every hand-out. Finally, we would become such experts in pampered selfishness that it would be utterly impossible for us to bestow even a crust to feed the poor, under promptings of love. In short, if so great a Teacher as God should train us in the unlovely arts of greed, he would blot love out of our natures. Only the ties of animal instinct would remain to bind a man to his mate or a mother to her child. In such a world no one could have a friend or be a friend. All of us would long since have become scheming calculators, endlessly seeking merely to use our companions for our own selfish ends—that is, if we could have survived as a moral species in such a world of tooth and claw.

This may remind you that scheming calculators in serving their own ends is about what men are, in far too many areas of their mutual relationships. Indeed, apart from the rights of his fellow men as God has presented these rights as ideal principles through the prophets and Jesus, why should not a man be thus selfish in the exploitation of his fellows?

You are perhaps familiar with so-called contract theories of society. They are associated with the names of the British philosophers, Hobbes and Locke, and the Frenchman, Rousseau. "I'll keep off your neck, if you'll keep off mine; and here is government to see that neither of us breaks the bargain." It is a mark of the century just passed that theories that put selfishness on

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such a neat barter basis should have had so much influence among intellectuals.

I beg to offer the suggestion that apart from God, and the unselfish impulses that are like unto his character, we have small moral basis in our own natures for anything like successfully working democracy. These unselfish impulses are inherent in human nature because of our creation in the divine image. They lie dormant, however, until they are drawn forth by overt stimuli. Some men have been stimulated to develop these highest traits through contact with God in nature. Others, by indirect relationship with Jesus in the civilization that we have loosely called Christian. But why should not the Christian Church be the best way to know God best and gain most from him for the rebuilding of our social order?

If you say to me that low and selfish traits are all too often found in the characters of Christians, I would reply: "What else could you expect from a Christianity that has been corrupted for seventeen centuries by pagan philosophy, a philosophy that has deceived leaders in the Church into thinking that they were dogmatically certain, not only of a future life, but of every basic point in God's revelation of himself to them? Fictitious certainty, false claims, overconfident arbitrariness, cocksureness, bigotry, hypocrisy! What foundation stones for a social order! Isn't it a wonder that our culture is as moral as it is?"

Really, I can think of only two factors that have saved mankind from utter degradation of the moral sort I have here outlined. One of these is the fact that Church leaders have been mistaken all along in their claims of dogmatic certainty and arbitrary authority. Consequently, the inherent and powerful, underlying forces of factual truth were protecting human souls against them. Facts do thus protect us against lies, you know. The lies a man tells about the fish that he caught are refuted by both sky and river, so long as these refrain from laying the boasted fish in his creel. The other factor is that men are actually more like their Maker, and in no wise as readily corrupted as theologians have assumed in their dogma of total depravity. My

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former schoolmate, Raymond Clapper, whom we lost in the South Pacific, you recall, left a living monument to his conception of the riches of human nature, in his aphorism: "Never overestimate the people's knowledge; nor underestimate their intelligence." Here, in short, is a glorious truth about our own potential greatness and goodness that current research into human capacities is now only beginning to uncover.

So the moral problem of how a man could ever be unselfishly good, with God offering handsome rewards for goodness, is a problem that has been simply *created by* our inherited, absolutist way of knowing. It is a false problem, another bogey conjured up by a mistaken mode of reasoning. Only because of their Greek-derived, demonstrative (rather than discoveratory) logic have Christian theologians led Church officials to claim to know the reality of a future life to a degree of certainty that would prompt them to collect \$40 per soldier from his loved ones, as the price of validating his through-ticket to heaven.

The whole problem melts when we restudy our Bibles under the guidance of the philosophy of Jesus and the prophets, and discover merely assurance of immortality, rather than any semblance of proof. From the evidences that add this assurance to the hope of his non-Christian neighbors, the Christian, who breaks the shackles of his bondage to pagan-inspired, traditional theology, derives *rational grounds for his faith* that enable him to live by it intelligently, not blindly. This means that his head can be Christian as well as his heart.

He has the promises of Jesus, that for devoted service "he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42); and that for every hidden kindness the "Father who seeth in secret shall recompense [him]." (Matthew 6:4, 6.) But *so long as the fulfillment of these promises is retained within the realm of the future life and never invades our earthly moral order with any bribing proof*, the prospect of promises fulfilled affects the Christian in a way similar to that exerted on workers by mutually friendly and trusting relations between their employer and themselves. It would not do for the employment contract to omit all

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stipulations concerning wages, for fear workers might then be intent on pay envelopes rather than wholeheartedly interested in their tasks.

No, indeed! What is needed by human beings of our caliber is the definite, conditional promise of a specified reward, accompanied by companionable, friendly interest in our welfare, and training calculated to develop our growing competence for the work assigned to us. Magnify assurance of remuneration into proof, by thumbtacking each worker's pay envelope to the wall back of his bench at the beginning of each week, and you would distract his attention from his task. Allow proof of reward to wait until pay day—let proof of immortality come with the entrance of each of us into life beyond the grave—and men are capable of their best. Blind doubt bewilders and dismays. Deceiving claims of absolute certainty paralyze with complacency. Assurance, based on competent evidence and trustworthy promises, arouses us to rejoice as strong men to “run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1.) Who wants to lose the keenest thrill of winning, by having his victory officially sealed in advance?

Thus, Soldier, we may thank God for the fact, as regards your killed buddies, and for ourselves when death strikes us, that we have only an *assured hope* of continued life. We may be glad that God was wise enough not to stimulate this hope in unprepared Israel until Jesus had fulfilled the earthly moral teachings of Moses and the prophets with principles of applied righteousness requisite to the building of the kingdom of God on earth. We may be grateful, too, that when God deemed us ready for assurance to supplement our general hope, he gave it to us through a Teacher as morally clean and strong as Jesus. If assurance of future life came to us by way of ouija boards, it could challenge us to achieve only the morals of the lumber pile. If it came from spiritist mediums, to whose seances we had paid admission, it would implicitly teach the moral order of wizardry practiced for gain.

In the glad good news of Jesus, there is no worth to heaven

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that is not immediately coupled with righteousness in our treatment of our fellows while we live with them on this earth. Eternity for the unrighteous, however, was a condition so terrible that Jesus found no words in either Greek or Hebrew to describe it. He could only point to the city dump of Jerusalem, a gully compared with which our sewage-disposal plants are pleasure parks. Future life for the sinner—whom even God cannot destroy and put out of his misery because that sinner's original creation in the Father's image includes a spark of God's own eternity—is like living forever in that gully, where the meanest of slaves were kept busy day and night burning combustible refuse, but where, in spite of their efforts, the "worm dieth not." (Mark 9:48.) That's all Jesus tried to tell us about it.

You can't find a better reason for excluding traditional habits of thinking from your own study of the Bible than the fact that this Greek-guided theology took Jesus' figurative pointing to the city dump in a starkly literal sense, and then mixed in with it a plentiful measure of pagan mythology, to turn out that smoky and smelly doctrine of a hell (and purgatory) of physical fire. Fire could burn your body. It could not possibly scorch the only thing about you that could be immortal: your soul or spirit that is like unto the Spirit God.

May I attempt to outline the barest glimpse of what Jesus may have meant by his dramatic pointing? Try to imagine the state of a man who had taken interest only in physical things, who had learned, during his earthly life, to find abundance of life only in the satisfaction of fleshly appetites or in the accumulation of material things like land and gold and the power over his fellows that wealth brings. Remember that our feeding of certain appetites rather than others forms habits, and that habit is "ten times nature." Then suppose that our man of physical and material habits dies, and finds himself in a state of existence where he survives only as a spirit, a mind made up of the capacities that were nurtured by feeding physical appetites and the meanings and memories derived from material satisfactions. He is now a spirit, who has learned to live only as a body. The only

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capacities of soul that he developed while living in a "temple of clay" are now wholly impossible for him. Neither are there lands or houses of splendid masonry in the state that is now his. Worst of all, he now sees his own folly in the clear light of what he might have been. An eternal, moral spirit, he yet tried instead to be a mere animal, when animal bodies and all material things are subject to decomposition, and spirits, if they are like God, cannot die.

Would you want to be he?

Mind you, I don't know these details. I'm glad God left me ignorant on matters that I shall be able and worthy to know, and to live with, only when and if I may achieve "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14.) Perhaps I should have omitted this "barest glimpse" entirely. My reason for inserting it here is the thought that you may need some sort of imagery to help you jar your thinking loose from the false imagery of brimstone and physical fire.

Now for a real leap, and this chapter is done. But hold your breath! The water is deep. And it may be colder than I think. Maybe you'd better stop reading right here.

The life of personal spirits, unhampered by physical bodies and not limited by time, in the sense that our life cycle of three score years and ten limits us, may imply some marvelous things in a physical universe as wondrous as ours. All the suns of the Milky Way will be our garden of jewels. We may travel among them as thought travels. What an astronomer's paradise! What a paradise for anyone who has followed the great adventure of scientific research!

And around many of these suns in our Galactic System, or in other such possible Milky Way systems that astronomers have tried to designate as island universes, there may revolve any number of planets like our earth and the other eight thus far discovered in our solar system. Do you suppose some of these may happen to be physically adapted to the needs of such beings as we are? And if so, do you think it possible that the God who created men on this earth, in his own personal and moral image,

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might have reason to create beings something like ourselves on many of them?

And if he should, he could do it only when the planet had cooled off sufficiently, or had reached that point in its physical and chemical history when it would be capable of sustaining life in temples of clay like our own animal bodies. So creation stories not too different from that of our own earth may be in process of enactment here or there in the universe right now, or again and yet again. If so, I confess to you I should like very much to be an observer of the process. Still more should I rejoice to be a small participant, were I, as a spirit companion of the Spirit God, to develop the essential qualifications.

More wondrous than creation is the moral drama of God's teaching of his human children on this earth. Would he be less interested, or any less obligated, to teach any children whom he might create on other planets? And might he not, during the first half-dozen æons after you and I join him, have many planets of his children at different stages in their progressive training toward achieving his way of life and establishing his kingdom on their planetary home? How many differing procedures might he choose to fit local planetary needs? Would there be some planets on which he would essentially re-enact our history of his use of prophets and apostles? Would he again use the device of incarnation? by which, himself, to step into the flesh and lives of his children on whatever planet, and thus give them a behavioristic presentation and demonstration of the moral characters and social organization they would have to achieve to be worthy of their high status as his created children?

Still more would I love to observe, or possibly to participate in, according to the measure of my competence, such an enterprise of social and moral science as heaven with so great a God might possibly be.

Quit laughing at me! I know how to laugh at myself. If I feel a bit foolish in writing these last pages, let me tell you I'd feel a thousand times more foolish merely resting on a flowery bed of ease or playing a harp! Bah!

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In fact, where is the foolishness of assuming that if there is any heaven at all, it is with God? If God exists at all, he is the interested Creator and continuing Operator of the very physical universe that our scientists study. And if God is real as a moral Person, his character is more like that of Jesus than any other example that we know.

O. K., Soldier! Foolish or not, by your own choices in life, you will largely determine your own destiny. Heaven lies before you. It stretches on ahead to unfathomed goals of heart's desire—for hearts that learn how to desire the highest things.

Take it or leave it! You're IT!

XV

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TOUGH luck to have to die to get to heaven! Who blundered? to get us into a fix like this?

Take it from me, Soldier, it wasn't God. And you can't lay it on either the prophets or Jesus. This blunder isn't in the Bible anywhere.

I hate to tell you who the blunderers were. I'm afraid you'll think those old boys whom I have called wise men are my prize scapegoats on whom to hang everything I don't like. But it's a simple matter of the early history of our Western, or European and American, civilization. Secular or political history is not so much concerned with the trends I refer to, and that's the world history you studied in high school. But every church historian and all historians of philosophy that I know, read the facts as I do. Anybody who wishes to check my interpretation of history for himself can do it in several evenings of reading.

The philosophy of any people is nothing but the set of mental habits they get into. Usually their wisest men, who do most of the thinking, lead their fellow citizens into these habits.

Now the established, matter-of-fact point of history that I have stressed again and again in this little book is the fact that the philosophy of ancient Greece, whose latest chief speakers were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, was a philosophy that assumed that some men could know final truth by merely thinking or reasoning it out. They just didn't need any actual experience of how it worked. They knew without going to all that trouble.

Now these three greatest thinkers that I have just named did not mean anything so highhanded as this. They outlined the procedure that stressed the role of sheer reasoning, and emphasized

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its value for human life. And they reasoned so expertly as to make their own judgments seem all-sufficient and final to their successors. But there was also eminent groundwork for the experimental procedure of modern science in their philosophy. Although their well-satisfied followers overlooked this side of the story completely, they might and could have done otherwise. Another emphasis at this root point in Western civilization might possibly have put us a thousand years ahead of our present attainments. Certainly neither Socrates, nor Plato, nor Aristotle ever meant to set himself up as a universal dictator of fixed dogmas to twenty-four centuries of civilization. It was their lightweight successors who did this awful thing to their memories (and to us), after they were dead.

Greek culture was already heading into a slump when Athens killed Socrates, and Plato gave up politics for philosophy. Later, when Plato was dead, the Athenians chased Aristotle out of town. Meantime Athens had fallen to the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War, and then, for a sweep of centuries, the centuries themselves moved faster than human thought. Only lesser lights devoted themselves to teaching in Plato's Academy, which, however, endured as the greatest educational institution in the whole Mediterranean world for a total of *916 years*, or until the Emperor Justinian closed its doors and confiscated its property in A.D. 529. Here was plenty of time for copy-cat teachers of philosophy to drill their students into the habit of looking back to Plato for answers to all their questions.

These were the very centuries during which the Christian Church was firmly establishing herself in Greco-Roman life. Where did she get her greatest leaders? Who among her converts rose to positions of responsible leadership over their fellow Christians? You've guessed it already. It was these students who had been drilled into backward looking by their teachers in Plato's Academy. And it will help you to get the force of this intellectual influence that flowed from the Academy to the Church, if you will mark the fact that, in all our Western civilization, only a few institutions like Cambridge in England, with a

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life of 736 years to date, and Oxford, with a grizzly age of 812, and the University of Paris, aged 835, even approach Plato's school in majestic centuries of life.

Is it any wonder that the best thinkers of Greece and Rome, drilled into rationalistic (rather than experiential) habits of thinking in this greatest of ancient schools, and whose social order was ruled almost exclusively by autocratic emperors, should fail to comprehend either the democracy of Israel or the practical thinking of her prophets? When they finally came into the Church and began studying the Old Testament Scriptures and the Christian manuscripts that were even then being collected into our New Testament, was there much likelihood that they would grasp, from Jesus and his apostles, a philosophy so different from their own as we now find his to be?

The greatest of the Christian intellectual leaders of this period was Augustine, who was thirty-three years old at the time of his conversion in the year 386. He had been a brilliant and faithful student of pagan and semipagan philosophy since the age of ten or twelve. All he could do, and all that his fellow intellectuals could do, human limitations being what they are, was to take the subject-matter of Christian or Bible teachings and rethink it *in terms of* the habits of mind they had already acquired. This meant cramping the principles of Jesus into the intellectual moulds of the philosophy of Socrates and Plato: convincing men of the truth of Christian teachings by reasoned arguments rather than by fruits in life. (Aristotle's influence did not reach the west till the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas appealed to his writings after they had been discovered and brought back to Europe by the Crusaders—appealed to Aristotle only to confirm Greek habits of mind already acquired.)

I'm not condemning this ancient philosophy. It needs no higher praise than the fact that it has served our civilization well as its whole intellectual foundation for twenty-four centuries. I am saying simply that it isn't Christian, and that we have finally outgrown it. Mankind is now ready for a new era. We've got to *get it going in our generation*, if our children are to avoid further,

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and infinitely more terrible, world wars. Now is our chance to change philosophical foundations, while we're at the job of mending our broken world.

The beauty of our situation, in moving on into the philosophy of Jesus and the prophets—which we have seen to be also the philosophy implied in the method of our latest and best developed laboratory sciences—is that we do not need to drop one item of value from this grand philosophy of Greece. We need merely to add a further step of thorough-going, experimental test to its reasoned conclusions. Wise men are not to be fired from their jobs. They are in line for *promotion* from the status of dictatorial masters to that of helpful servants.

Promotion? That's just what I mean. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11.)

Now this laboratory-ignoring philosophy that second- and third-century Christians borrowed from the Greeks not only did things to the Christian idea of heaven, as we saw in the preceding chapter. It emphasized heaven to an extent that broke its relationship to earth. You can see how this philosophy worked in the minds of these ancient and conscientious leaders of thought. Put yourself in their place. Here you are with habits of mind that your social surroundings handed you before you outgrew your knee-length toga, habits that make you think you have to know a thing fully, absolutely, right in your head, in order to know it at all. These habits likewise render your knowing the impatient sort that won't stand for the plodding procedure of letting your children try out your best judgments for themselves. Thus equipped, if you set your brain to work on questions of life after death, you will just have to move over into the realm you are studying, that is, *in your thinking*.

If you do not thus jump into the next world by a leap of imagination, you won't be using your philosophy; and this is equivalent to saying that you won't be using the only head you have. So if the habits of thinking that you acquired before you were ten, by social contagion or cultural inheritance from the group that reared you, happen to be habits that minimize actual

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experience and magnify inner processes of reasoning, this is the way you will think on all of the big questions you meet. You'll stick to your native common sense on all simpler problems. But as the question of a future life is one of the biggest, you will certainly fall back on your inherited thinking habits, if you grapple with it at all.

Now since philosophical habits of mind are the very last habits that anybody criticizes or seeks to change, as I suggested at the end of Chapter IV, it's a cinch that you and your companion thinkers will keep on jumping into heaven by fancy headwork for many centuries before you will undertake that hardest of all tasks, the one we have to do now to save our kiddies from World War III. This hardest of all tasks is one that we don't even think of, until everything else fails. First we repair *things*, when our world goes wrong. Then, our *institutions*. We spend centuries on this second phase. Last of all we question, and revise after we figure out how to do it, our *way of thinking* about things and institutions. We are lazier in our heads than in either our hands or feet. We rebel at critically examining our own basic habits of knowing, for this might require that we attempt to discover and formulate new procedures to take their place.

That's how it happened, Soldier! This way of knowing that they inherited from pre-Christian Greece is what made our Church Fathers feel that they must magnify Jesus' assurance of a future life into *knowledge*. So inevitably they became other-worldly in their thinking, as many writers have complained. They emphasized the future life at the expense of this life. They glorified heaven to come in a way that led them to miss the very heart of Jesus' teaching: that he had come to *proclaim the kingdom of heaven* and to establish it *on earth*.

He came to establish it by suggesting principles of life to us, in the light of which we are to learn to build heaven on earth for ourselves. You see it wouldn't be heaven for us if anyone, even God, did this building for us. For that would trespass against our freedom to an extent that would prompt us to rebel, no matter how fine it was. Every normal person would say of such a pre-

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fabricated heaven: "Even if that was good, I wouldn't like it!"

This trait is not big-headedness or mere stubbornness in us. It's one of the grandest protective mechanisms our personalities have. We like to see for ourselves, and do things for ourselves, because that is the way we find best fulfillment of what we are. Surrender your personal initiative, your free right to be yourself and to determine your own courses of action—yes, your God-given right to make your own mistakes and commit your own sins, and then do your own suffering for them—give up these bulwarks of your own personality, and you have made a long start toward relinquishing the moral integrity which alone could enable you finally to turn from sin on your own motion and begin building a Christlike life. Ever read Kipling's "Tomlinson"? It stresses my point admirably. That poor weakling, who spent his "life in Berkeley Square" sinning or serving at the prompting of someone else, was not wanted by either St. Peter or Satan.

The building of heaven on earth is therefore our task. Heavenly mansions prepared for all who are worthy of them, when earthly life is over, is a matter we can leave entirely to God. No need to give them a thought. They are not even a fitting theme for prayer. To go celestial house-hunting when earthly house-building waits to be done is to be guilty of conduct unbecoming a disciple of Jesus. It insults God by its lack of elementary confidence in him.

It is plain, then, that there can't be heaven here or hereafter for either sinners or lazy louts. Heaven simply is a moral achievement or *condition* of righteousness in personal character that neither indolent nor evil men achieve. What they attain, on the contrary, is beastliness; and therefore beasts of hell they are. This is just what hell is. It is hell to fail to achieve heaven!

Let me slip you one grand, final point in support of the judgment that heaven in a future life is to be achieved only by building heaven for your fellows on this earth while you live here. It likewise supports the judgment that this heaven on earth is not the consequence of any religious ceremonies save as these may inspire you and teach you thus to live righteously toward men. This

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point is a Bible fact that our leaders in the Church have characteristically, and all but universally, overlooked. At least, they don't see enough significance in it to prompt them to change their vocabulary. I refer to the impression, which I am sure you have received from preachers busily saying the same old thing, that Jesus taught and preached *religion*; that he founded the Christian *religion*.

He never even used the word. "Religion" is a word derived from the language of the Romans—Latin, we have called it. It refers primarily to ceremonies of worship, to public gatherings for worship, meetings where people sing and testify and listen to sermons. Not once, in all our gospel records of him, does Jesus use any Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic equivalent of this Roman word.

What word does he use? If he isn't teaching religion, what does he teach?

He teaches *life*. This is the word that he uses, and emphasizes through all his ministry. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John 10:10.) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6.)

The very fact that Jesus teaches life rather than religion should be an effective cure for "otherworldliness." The ceremonies of religion in Israel, the sacrificial offerings of the blood of bulls and goats, were only a preparation for Jesus' principles of *life*. The same is true today. Religion is only a means to life, and its failure is complete unless it does something to you and me that impels us toward the achievement of Christlikeness in all our dealings with every other human soul on earth. Only in a limited sense, then, is a truly Christian Church an agency of religion. Its religious ceremonies of worship and confessions of faith, its hymns of praise and aspiration, its united prayer, its dramatizing of salvation through forgiveness conditioned on deep realization of the meaning of the Cross—all of these are beautifully worthy of Jesus, *if* and *when* they get under the skins of hard-boiled hombres like you and me and get us actually going at the task of kingdom-building he delegated to us.

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I don't know how Jesus makes Christians save through the contagion of fellow-workmanship. Passing the entrance examination of powerfully significant initiation ceremonies is only a beginning. A Christian is not known by any union card that some official signs, and which he may carry in his billfold. Skilled craftsmanship in rebuilding human society and its culture according to the principles of Jesus is the Christian's only enduring mark of identification.

Christians, so made and accredited by the principles of Jesus—and this means *Christians*, rather than Churchmen—have a unique and crucially essential responsibility in the present world crisis. There is danger that statesmen and diplomats, working at the task of winning and conserving world peace, may become swamped in details and technicalities. Somebody needs to specialize on keeping the larger principles that are involved ever at the forefront of human attention. If it is essential to “relate the coal scuttle to the universe,” in order to be educated, it is a matter of life or death to the new world order we are now building, *to relate* each community in the Balkan, powder-keg corner of Europe, each industrial village in Korea or China, each tribe in Malaya or Madagascar, in fair trade relations and wholesome, cultural communication, with the most prosperous and progressive peoples on earth.

Who are, or should be, better qualified for this task than men of good will who specialize in the work of learning and teaching the way of life taught by Jesus? Who can teach Christian principles better than those who know best this one who, in all human history, stands without equal as a Specialist in the principles of God?

Conventional or traditionally accepted interpretations of this Specialist in the God-taught principles of human life are evidently insufficient for the present crisis. We have noted the historical reasons why this is true. The day is at hand, then, for the best Churchmen and the best Christians to become better Christians yet by a restudy of the prophets and Jesus in our earliest and most original and complete records of them—the Bible. Maybe the present sufferings of the least of mankind are bitter

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enough to drive sympathetic Christians to this renewed study of their Christ. At least, this is our brightest—perhaps our only—hope.

Mankind must do infinitely more than swear off from war, or like the stumbling drunkard we will seek it yet again. Only a new heart, a reborn will, a reoriented head—a readjusted and re-consecrated life plus a rebuilt social order—can save our toddling children.

Soldier, there are the Hebrew prophets! There is Jesus!

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